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DEDICATION.

This book is dedicated to one who inspired in me a love for Nature, and to profit by the lessons learned by this great teacher, as Charles Kingsley said, "To see in every hedge-row marks of angels' feet, epics in every pebble underneath our feet." I have traveled from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and in no State have I found the combination Maine has to offer. When once you step on a Bangor and Aroostook train you are whirled through city's luxuries. Then in a few hours more you are in the wildest jungles. As you lie back in the comfortable couch you feel the balmy breezes from the fir trees blowing across your face. It seems to whisper "All is well with the world."

In the depths of the forest you find modern homes and conveniences. It was on such a trip I decided to use Maine as a background for my story, in hopes it might turn others to Maine to learn through Nature the true God. I hope the one who for many years has slept 'neath the mantles of snow will even yet understand the lessons were not forgotten. I long for others to derive the rest and contentment found in the great Maine forest, under the spell of the firs.

"And this our life, exempt from public haunt, finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything."

CHAPTER I.

GORDON GAYNOR.

"The path of ambition leads to many political graves. It is, indeed, a happy state of affairs that we are not all of the same mind."

The speaker was a tall, broad-shouldered man of perhaps thirty and nine years, with clear-cut features and laughing blue eyes. He now gave a sarcastic glance toward the lady before him. He walked to the large window and watched the throng of people passing along the street, then he turned once more to the lady, who sat silent and cold before him. She was a woman of five or ten years his senior. Her heavy hair she chose to call an amber shade. It seemed to flash red flames around her. She was a portly, short woman, with puffy hands and face. It was a face easy to read. Pride and selfishness predominated. Not even in her youth could she have been called attractive. She now raised her eyes to her husband's face as he gazed intently at her. A flush of anger overspread her countenance.

"We will let it pass now and forever! I might have known you would fail! To think,

you let McCoy win over you—an Irishman, and you an American. Of course you were not capable, or else they never would have voted an Irishman over an American. The idea!" she burst forth, as she rose from her chair and stood before him.

"I wish you had never run for Congress! I could have stood it better than to be defeated. People did not know you before, and now——"

"Yes, and now they know you are the wife of the man who failed," he laughingly retaliated. "All I needed was O'Brien for a name; Irish, you see," Then a serious look filled his eyes as he continued, "The Irishman was the best man, that was all, and, as I said before, it is lucky that we are not all of the same mind. But wife, I worked for the election and I am all in, so to speak. I overworked and I now am going to rest. Then I shall start all over and be ready for the next election. Perhaps I shall add 'O' to my name—O'Gaynor; how would that do? Cheer up, wifie, cheer up. It is not so bad, after all!"

He stooped to pick up the flowers he had handed her as he entered. He came to her side and placed the fragrant bouquet on her shoulder, looking down with laughing eyes into her angry, disappointed face.

"Wifie, I am more sorry for you than you

realize, but we will go to New York to my old home in the village and forget all for a time; what do you say, wifie? When shall we start?"

She pulled her arm away and passed out of the room. He stood and watched her, then he sank into a chair and closed his eyes. Past weeks of toil, study, lectures, and dinners, flashed before him. Failure meant nothing, compared with his wife's angry, harsh words. Again he was at his old home in New York, with brothers, sisters and parents. Then his loneliness among strangers—his meeting Hattie Brown. The friendly interest she gave him when he came home from work, tired and lonely; how she greeted him with a kind word, and how this friendship had ripened into love; or was it the love he had believed it to be? She, too, was alone in the world, and they were thrown much together. She was alone except for a sister much younger than herself, whom she was educating; yet she was alone, as the sister was away at school and more of a burden than comfort. Her loneliness had appealed to his tender heart in its own sorrow. There had been a quiet wedding, then a trip to the old home. This home was now in the hands of strangers. Then their starting a home, and his struggle for success. Then the sister's home coming. She had made his home

a hell until her marriage. His wife's temper and true self unfolded before him more and more each year, until life seemed a shallow stream of trials. His interest in political contests and his study helped him to pass the worry from his brain. He realized that his wife married him for a home, without a shadow of love for him. Then his entering into the political life, his attempt to be nominated for Congress, his failure. Now he was alone with his wife's harsh, bitter denunciation. What was he to do ? He must live on with her. Perhaps a rest would bring things back to common order. Perhaps she would consent to go on the morrow, as she loved to travel and exhibit herself to the public. Surely she would consent to go and remain in New York while he rested in his home town. The dinner bell brought him to the world again and to plain facts. He must face them. He arose and passed into the dining room. His wife never spoke as he entered. He seated himself at the table and smilingly said, "Wifie, let us attend the Maud Adams play to-night. I hear it is exceptionally fine. Would you like it?" She gave him a cold, haughty glance. "'No, thank you. I prefer to let you receive your congratulations alone." Not a word was spoken through the remainder of the meal. He went to the hall, took down his coat and hat and

hastily left the house. Once in the street, he was undecided whether to brave the displeasure of the men who stood by him or to return to his home. No, he must face the disappointment sooner or later. He would go to the Public Library. There he always found good friends in books. He stepped on a car and came face to face with one of his firm supporters in the campaign. He bowed and smiled as he took a seat by his side.

"Sorry you did not win out, old boy, but no harm done. You proved the spirit was there and again there will be another chance later on. We are still for you, remember that!" As he spoke he rose to leave the car. When the car pulled up at the street corner he turned to Gaynor and said, "Remember your old friends are still at your call." Gaynor watched him alight. He was a man of about fifty-nine or sixty years of age and his clothes and manner betokened the true aristocrat. Gaynor drew a deep breath of relief. After all, the failure was not so bad. He had tried, and if he had failed he would be a coward to give up an interest in political work because of one failure.

It was with a lighter heart that he entered the massive library and sought his best friends, the books. He was soon lost in thought and study and knew not how fast the hours sped,

until somebody, mentioning his name, called his attention to the fact that it was growing very late. Again the voice called his name, and he listened intently as he gazed around him. There was an aged gentleman and lady at the next table. The lady was saying, "Yes, Gaynor lost, McCoy won, and I am heartily sorry, although I do not know the man. Personally I know he must have a good, gentle disposition to put up with that wife of his. I knew her from a child, and such a life as she led that mother and brother of hers. Caused her brother to leave home; and then her child came. After that she was not quite so bold. Her mother cared for the little one, and spoke of it as her adopted child, and until her death she worked and cared for Hettie's child, and with such a temper as that child had it was not an easy matter to care for her. Hettie became kinder to the old mother as years passed on, but that was all the kindness I ever knew of her. They say to this day Gordon believes that child to be his wife's sister, and he caring for her until marriage, and Hettie living that lie every day to her husband. I have said I was surprised Gordon married her, and she so much older. I do believe there must be a week spot in him, but I pity the man, and am sorry, very sorry, he was defeated." The old man rose slowly. "Yes, dear, you are

just like a woman. No thought of his methods, the welfare of the people, what he stood for, but just sorry for him because he did not win. I can't say I am, for I am a believer in McCoy. Gaynor ran for Congress to get away from that wife of his and home trials! Still women want the ballot!"

Gaynor moved slowly from the table as one stunned. As he passed out into the street he ran against McCoy. "Well, well, old boy. I am sorry we both could not be elected, but as it's impossible, let us remain friends," and he gave him a hearty hand clasp. "I admire your grit, Gaynor. Althought we do not agree on the question, I must congratulate you on what you have done for yourself as a politician. I have been in the race for years, and to-day I have not as many true supporters as you, although I won the vote." Gaynor stood as in a stupor. "Sorry to have detained you so long. I presume you were after that car. I wanted you to know I admired your grit."

"Thanks, many thanks," replied Gaynor. As the Irishman moved on he thought to himself, "Queer fellow, that fellow Gaynor; queer man, yet a great worker, a great thinker; yet not one word of congratulations could I have expected from him, but before he seemed to be more of a gamester than he is to-night, yet no doubt it was a great disappointment to him.

I am sorry; by gorie, I am sorry for that man." McCoy did not know how much Gaynor needed sympathy, not in his defeat alone, or his great Irish heart would have cheered Gaynor on to other fields of success. Gaynor stepped on a car and was soon at his home gate. He could not think; it was all like a dark, black dream. He could stand for anything but deceit. He bowed his head on the gate and his strong form shook with sobs. It was long after midnight when he once more entered his home.

CHAPTER II.

MAY IS YOUR CHILD, BUT WHERE IS HER FATHER?

"Even in the darkest hours, there are only sixty minutes."

As the breakfast bell rang, Gaynor awoke from a deep sleep to find the rays of sun bursting into his room.

His wife had already awakened and was now emerging from the bathroom, fully dressed, he red locks flashing as the sun fell across her brow. She entered the dining room and turned to the large window and watched the busy world below on the street.

This morning her husband would be free from the rush and study that for the past few months had kept him away from home, but ere long he too would have to once more join in the race for the Almighty Dollar and start in with the throng of busy mortals to win their daily bread. He had invested heavily in the campaign; she had warned him not to spend so much, but dinners, the lectures, and all that goes with a political campaign, had left them sadly in need of cash, for Gaynor could not turn to the millions as McCoy could.

Well, one thing was certain, he was in no condition to enter the field of labor, as he said he must rest. She, too, wished to get away from all the worry it had caused her, and the sneers from Mrs. Blackie next door. Yes, it was certain they must go away and rest until this all blew over. If it were not so dull and lonely in the great Maine Woods, she would plan to visit Aunt Dorothea, but she shuddered as she thought of the great Maine wilderness. She had enjoyed her cousin Carl; somehow he seemed so different from the others. Aunt Dorotha was a sweet old lady, but so hopelessly old-fashioned. Then Diana, such a boyish, coarse girl, and so weird with those dark eyes of hers. She gave a disgusted toss of her head at the though of Diana, and a weird feeling crept into heart at the thought

of the dark, penetrating eyes of her cousin. She could not deny they were eyes that looked deep and understandingly; as she remembered her as a child, she wondered if Diana had grown up as quickly as May had. Well, May was happily married—she was thankful for that—and Diana was still on the market! That certainly did not look as if Diana was a very attractive lady.

Yes, she would like to go to Maine and see Carl, and perhaps seek comfort in beguiling him into admiring her, to show Gaynor how little he meant to her happiness. Much as she detested the Maine Woods, it now held out a safe retreat to hide them from the public for a time. Then she knew Gaynor must rest before he could do anything; he was in no condition to make money now, that was sure; and money was her god. Yes, she must make arrangements for a vacation for him, and he could rest all right down in Maine. Yes, her mind was made up: they would go to Aunt Dorotha's in Maine.

As Gaynor entered she slowly gazed into his face and was surprised at the set, heavy look in the usually laughing eyes. He never spoke as he took his seat at the table, omitting the blessing that he usually asked against her will. He helped himself, and she asked, with a tinge of anger:

"Are you ready to start on a vacation this morning?"

He looked at her long and earnestly, then said:

"I may take a vacation to-day, and it may be longer than you think for, now. After breakfast I wish to talk of this vacation, but not now."

She felt something was wrong. Whatever did it mean? She again noticed the set, heavy jaw and the look in the usually laughing eyes. It told her it was best for her to wait and let him explain. She ate very little and they soon arose and crossed the long halls. She was angry, yet she could not help but follow him. He turned to her and said:

"Hettie, I have tried to make a good home for you. I have struggled to get above the labor-day class. I have been the means of your becoming popular as the wife of a politician. I have put up with your insults in silence, and I have never deceived you. Of course, I know there is not love between us—that passed years ago, if ever there was any. You were working for your daily bread when I married you; since then you have not turned your hand to do anything for a living. I finished the education of May to please you, thinking she was your only sister. This is what I want to talk to you about. May is

your—child. But where is her father?"

Mrs. Gaynor fell back as if struck by a heavy blow; her anger turned to fright. First she turned a deathly color, then her face flushed to purple shade. She sank into a chair and burst into tears.

The sight of tears caused him again to let his tender heart get the better of him. He said, more kindly:

"Hettie, why have you deceived me in this? You must have known it would come to me from a stranger's lips sooner or later. I could have perhaps pitied and forgotten if you had confided in me; but to think you have treated me with the contempt you have "shown" since our marriage, simply because I began life as an errand boy and worked step by step to get where I am now. You have thrown 'the workingman's uneducated theory' at me until I could have willingly passed from it all by a pistol shot. The memory of my mother saved me from that. I knew you were unreasonable and unjust, but I believed you pure in character! Hettie, where is the man? I think you had best return to him, for we must for once and all settle this matter."

She sat with head bowed low, and dry, hard sobs shook her form.

"Do you want to continue to live with me, when I can not trust you, can not love you?

You care nothing for me, as you have so often told me of late years. In the sight of God, we are nothing to each other. I have tried to respect you, Hettie, and to treat you as my vows bound me to do, to love and honor; but what a mockery it has all been. And now, Hettie, I can not even have the feeling of respect for a woman who will push her husband back from every ambition, every tie that binds him before God; a man can never overlook that; and deceit is the worst of all. I have been thinking of our separation for some time, as I could see we were drifting farther and farther apart. Before last night I could not feel right before my Maker to mention it to you."

He explained to her what he had overheard in the Public Library.

"I had pity for one bestowed with the disposition you have," he went on. "I believed you were truthful to me, and I had hoped, if I were elected to Congress, it would perhaps bring your old respects or regards back once more and we could live and respect our vows we made before God on our wedding day. But, Hettie, the contempt you have shown me when I failed in the election, turned me into another being. Then the knowledge of your child! Oh, God! Hettie, how could you deceive me in this way!"

She raised her face to his and it seemed

that it had aged in these few months. A ghastly look overspread her face as she realized what a divorce would mean to her. It would mean to go back to a "working girl's position"; what about "the uneducated labor class" now? She would soon be one if Gordon carried out his threats. She would tell him all the whole truth now. It was the darkest hour of her life.

"Gordon, listen for a few moments"—her usual harsh voice was scarcely above a whisper —"I have never known a father's love; I knew a mother who held the place of both. She let me run to suit myself. It seemed I was always lectured for every turn I made. Often it was thrown up to me that I had no father. My father left my mother when I was only a baby. I grew up to care for nobody, and not many cared for me. I ran away from home one season and waited tables at the Beach. Detectives located me, after my mother had nearly given up hope of ever finding me. My mother came and begged me to return home with her, but I refused—first, because I liked waiting on the public; second, because some one was kind to me—one of the guests, Ray Vandyke. He noticed me and was very attentive to me. He waited for me in the evening to stroll along the Beach. People talked of this man Vandyke as a noted man,

and I was very proud of his interest in poor unknown Hettie Brown. He gave me lessons in English, German, and French and taught me to look for a better and higher life. He said he intended for me to become his wife some day. He would not consent for me to tell my mother at that time. He said he wanted to ask her for me face to face, and I was, oh, so happy! He told me I could become a very successful woman if I would put heart and mind into my studies. I can't ever make you understand just what he did mean to me—who had never been petted or praised before. I grew to love him; I worshipped him; I loved him as I had never loved my mother, whom I thought was all the world to me. I grew into a quiet girl, where before I had been rude and thoughtless. Life looked bright indeed when he vowed to love me. I was so happy that season, after all the years of unhappiness. I grew to love that man as mortal never loved before. I obeyed his slightest wish. He promised we would be married just as soon as the season closed at the Beach. My heart was light, and I wrote charming letters to poor old mother of my studies and success in the work there. I told her I would return soon and make her very happy."

Here Hettie bowed her head and low, dry sobs shook her form. Gaynor stood as if

rooted to the spot. Hettie went on, with bowed head:

"One evening Vandyke did not wait for me and I was thinking that I would go to his room and inquire if he were ill, when the chambermaid came to me.

" 'Miss Brown,' she said, 'Mr. Vandyke requested me to hand you this note, as he was called away this evening.'

"I opened the note like one in a dream. It simply said: 'Every moment has sixty seconds. I have enjoyed every second while with you, Hettie; but all good things end for me. I must now return to my wife. Yours forever, Ray Vandyke.' I knew no more until I awoke one morning in my own room with my mother's face bending over me. She then knew of my condition. Not a word of blame ever crossed her lips, but pain in her face told me just what she suffered. I lay there for months. Then—May was born. After I recovered, I put my whole soul into trying to repay my mother. She later had a story published of her adopting a child. As years went by, the escapade of Hettie Brown was forgotten. May grew up as my mother's adopted child, and knows no different to this day. I never placed myself in any man's way after that. I worked on after my mother's death and educated May, as my mother's request was to keep

her under discipline. Then you came, and I saw your loneliness and grew to respect you for your manliness and truthfulness. I was wondering who would care for me as I grew older; and then you planned our wedding as you would a business proposition. I reasoned with myself about the right and wrong of it all. I felt, if you knew May's true history, you would change your plans; so I entered into the life we are now living without a murmur. I wanted a home, and here you opened the way; I practiced deceit upon you, made you think I cared when I do not know the word love; and never have since Vandyke's letter. I hated the world and distrusted every one I came in contact with. Then you let me rule the home until I forgot the past and all but my ambition to become noted, so that, perhaps, Vandyke might hear of me after his cruel deception. I know I have failed to act the part of a wife, and no doubt deserve all and more than you have said. I sometimes hated you for your honor and kindness to me. But this morning I had thought I would turn over a new leaf and live to please you. Now it is too late! There is only one way open to me; it has been open to me all along. So, Gordon, I am willing to abide by your decision. I have failed ten thousand times more than you could fail."

Gordon Gaynor stood now by Hettie's chair. He had drawn near as she talked, and now his hand rested on the back of her chair. He gazed intently into her face when she spoke of the one way open to her. He shuddered, as he knew full well the meaning of her words. He pitied, blamed, and sorrowed as he gazed into the tear-stained face of his wife; he must not forget that she was his wife still. What step should he take? To leave her meant suicide; yet to remain with her, feeling as he did toward her, would also be a crime. She had said he had planned their marriage as he would have planned a deal in business; and she did not think it would make so much difference to him even if she did not care or love him. Why not settle this in a business-like manner? And perhaps save her, as well as himself, from worse crimes that already threatened them.

"Hettie, I said this affair must be settled; but since hearing your story, it has changed my mind in this respect: my pity and sympathy are all with you, Hettie. You spoke of turning over a new leaf. How did you intend to do this? Did you mean you intended to help me upward and give encouragement where you have given contempt before? I intend to cling to the political life, as I have many supporters, and I am going to make another try for Congress. A man's wife can be

of great influence if she chooses to be. Hettie, did you mean you meant to help me on to attain the goal I seek?"

"Gordon, this morning I had decided I would go on a vacation with you to my aunt's in the Maine Woods. I intended to make you forget all for a while, then return refreshed; and I intended to let the help go and tend to the household affairs myself. I hoped you would return to Baylor's law firm and we would save for two years, until you once more could have a footing to enter the campaign if you choose to do so. I know a rest in the Maine Woods would make you forget; for at Aunt Dorotha's there is nobody to care for public life; it would indeed mean a rest to both of us. But do as you choose; it shall be as you say."

Gaynor stood motionless for some moments; yes, he needed the rest; he must have a rest. He clasped Hettie's hand.

"Remember, Hettie, no more deceit. Have courage to be true at all times. I am willing, for the sake of our vows to give you one more trial." He dropped her hand with a sigh, and walked from the house.

CHAPTER III.

GAYNOR MEETS DIANA

"Far better a life of single bliss, than double blister."

Gaynor went straight to the Public Library, where he pulled book after book toward him, but he could not get interested in his study; it seemed ages since he left there the night before. Well, he had agreed to leave it all for a time, and the morrow would find him on his way to the great Maine wilderness. Hettie had told him of the lonely forest with only a home here and there, of the old-fashioned home and family of her aunt's. He felt the cold chills creeping over him as he thought of a week's stay in such surroundings, yet to straighten out his home affairs he must accept. He must move on and see the Baylor firm. He quickly passed out the door and into the street, where he came face to face with Mr. Baylor.

"Good morning, Mr. Baylor. I was just on my way to see you about taking me back into your firm. Have you a position at present?"

"Good morning, good morning, Gaynor. Yes, indeed, I have an opening for you. I was thanking my lucky stars, last night, for your defeat in the campaign. I am not much of a

friend, you will be thinking, but I need you, boy, need you right away."

Gaynor quickly said:

"I did not mean right away, Mr. Baylor. I am in no shape for work or business of any kind until I rest for a week or so. I am going to the great Maine Woods for a little quiet and rest. But I may come to you on my return? I want to know if you will still have an opening for me?"

"Bless your heart, boy; I need you now. But I can wait until your return. Yet, let me warn you, boy, it will not be all idleness you will find in the Maine Woods. No, oh, no, lad; but Maine will make a new man of you. I go there; indeed I go. I have for years. 'The Red God' calls me and I answer the call. Yes, lad, I go; Maine is a paradise. Bake to Nature and God. Yes, yes; enjoy yourself, lad; then come back to me with a clear brain and a steady hand."

Old Mr. Baylor's eyes filled with a far-away light. It meant rest, contentment, and happiness when he spoke of the Maine Woods, and Gaynor thought Maine must have some attractions or a man of Baylor's wealth would not spend it in the great wilderness. He inquired of him what amusement he found to take him to Maine.

"Well, bless my heart, lad, and have you

never been there? Amusement? Why, lad, the whole world knows it to be the playground of the nation. Every man who has a drop of sporting blood in his veins knows there is no place just like Maine. It has the most beautiful lakes, and ponds, scattered through its great forests. There are acres and acres of virgin timber, where the moose and deer abound. I have gone up into the lakes, then up beyond the great lakes to the river in a canoe. You can glide up to the monarch moose and the timid deer as they stand taking their baths. They dart gracefully away and leave you gazing in amusement and joy at the beauty of the wilds. Yes, Gaynor, you can't realize, out here in this dusty old city, that such delightfully clean and beautiful places are to be found. Yes, Gaynor, Nature means getting in touch with our Master. As the ozone from the great fir trees waft across your face, it brings you the true rest you seek."

Tears of memory filled old Mr. Baylor's eyes. "Don't talk about the Maine Woods to me, boy, or I may neglect my duty here and join you. I can't express to you just how much I get out of the great Maine Woods, lad, except to tell you it is grand, boy—simply grand!"

As they reached the office, Gaynor said, "I may come to you on my return, then?"

The Lake lay like a Mirrow Where one could glide into The very heart of Nature,

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"Yes, indeed, you may, and may it be with a new vigor in your frame."

"I shall look forward more eagerly to my vacation now. I was not much taken with the idea at first, but my wife wanted to go."

"Well, Gaynor, all I have to say is this: If you go to Maine and stay there for a while, say, just one week, and on your return tell me you did not derive anything from your stay, and also say you did not learn something you knew nothing of before, I will give you a full month's salary then! I know you will come back like I always do, hoping the days will fly fast, so I can return to the great fir trees for another vacation. My wife tells me I rave in my sleep about the great Maine Woods. I have gone there with different parties, and no man ever goes there without going back year after year. Good-by, Gaynor, good-by, and may you derive the good I do from the stay."

It was with a lighter heart that Gaynor entered his door once more. He found Hettie busily packing their suit cases. She looked up with a queer quivering smile playing over her face. "Well, Hettie, I have seen Baylor and he holds a position for me. I am going to rest until we start for Maine. You better rest, too, as the train leaves early in the morning." He passed into his room and was soon lost to the world in slumbers. Hettie arranged the home

affairs, and all evening she packed and sewed, and it was late at night when she lay her head on her pillow to rest.

As the train dashed on Gaynor gazed out of the window; Hettie read a book. They had wakened early and were fresh for the start to the Maine Woods and Aunt Dorotha's. Almost a happy light shown in Gaynor's eyes; it was all as Baylor said. Hettie laid down her book and as she looked out the window; she was surprised as she saw the quiet little villages, the thriving towns, and cities. When she had been here ten years ago, the road was new and where now there were the villages and clear-cut forms, it had then been a great forest, a wilderness as she so often told Gaynor. Maine had grown wonderfully improved; she could not believe that a town could grow up so quickly. She had only remembered the great wilderness where there were all sorts of wild things. Uncle Guy had been dead two years, but he was a great worker in his time, and with Carl's help, they might have kept apace with the times. How many times she had told Gaynor of the great wilderness, and now he might think she had just deceived him in this as she had in everything else. She touched his arm to attract his attention, but he sat as if lost to the whole world; now he looked at her as if dreaming; she looked into his eyes

and said, "Remember it is over ten years since I visited the Maine Woods before, or was over this road. Then it was new, and it is simply a miracle how so much can be accomplished in so short a time." As Gaynor felt Hettie spoke truthfully in this, she did not realize that times changed in Maine as well as in other parts of the world. "It may all be changed at Aunt Dorotha's too. I may not even know the town of Essex when we arrive there. But when the train pulled in at the station, she saw her cousin Carl as he swayed his broad shoulders through the crowds of people who were gathered at the station to meet friends or to see the friends depart. It was a lively crowd for a small village but it was a village no longer; mills, hotels, churches, and business blocks faced her as she stepped from the train, and into her cousin Carl's arms. "Welcome cousin Hettie," he said as he touched her brow with his lips. "My husband, Gordon, cousin Carl. Gaynor stood by her side and bowed as Carl caught his hand in a hearty hand-clasp. "Welcome, Gordon, to our little village and the wilderness as Hettie choose to call our city," and Carl's voice rang out in a merry laugh as he noticed Hettie's surprise at the advancement of their town. "How are Aunt and all the home people" inquired Hettie. "All well when I left, anticipating the pleasure of having

our cousins with us this evening." They chatted merrily on until they came to the wide gates and cement drive-ways that led to the home; Hettie's eyes took in every improvement, and was no less surprised at the large house, with its well-kept lawns and walks, surrounded by shrubs like many city mansions; indeed the wilderness was changed. Aunt Dorotha stood on the veranda, with dainty Marie Sutton and her mother Mrs. Sutton. They all gave Hettie a hearty welcome then turned to Gordon Gaynor. Mrs. Sutton was like Diana and about Hettie's age, with soft blue eyes like her mother. After some few moments Hettie asked if Diana were not at home Aunt Dorotha for the first time noticed Diana's absence. "Marie, dear, run and call Diana; tell her the cousins are here," she said turning to Marie who slowly rose from the couch saying, "Well grannie she won't come, until she finishes her cooking anyway, so what's the use?" Marie obey your grandmother at once," said Mrs. Sutton quietly and reprovingly to Marie. Gordon Gaynor sat as if dazed; this home was a haven to him! So different from Hettie's description of it. Everything was so peaceful and cheerful; Aunt Dorotha's saintly face beamed in happiness; Mrs. Sutton quiet and lady-like, Carl a type of a man who had been prosperous—in-

telligently bearing and cheerful countenance bespoke success accomplished. The home was modern in many respects, yet with the old-fashioned simplicity combined. The lake like a great mirrow just as Mr. Baylor had told him, where one could pull a canoe right up into the heart of nature. Hettie had said politics were not known at Aunt Dorotha's but, if he did not miss his guess, behind the set features of Cousin Carl there rested the brain of one interested in public life. Yes, Baylor was right; he would become a better man after a glimpse into the Maine Woods; he awoke to facts to hear Mrs. Sutton's soft voice speaking his name and he turned just as a vision passed to Hettie's chair. Gaynor saw a slender form and he followed her with his eyes until she paused. Hettie sat as if she were stupefied, as the girl said, "Cousin Hettie have you forgotten me, Diana?" Hettie clasped the girl's hand, the dark eyes seemed to look through and through her, "I should never have known you Diana; you have changed since I last saw you. "There was a tinge of bitterness in Hettie's voice that was not lost on Gaynor. "Yes indeed" answered the soft voice, "Many changes can come in ten years. May is happily married, since she and I followed poor old Dad through the fields, and he, too, is not here to welcome you, Hettie. Indeed ten years can

bring many changes, but Hettie, I am the same old tomboy girl that you could not endure." "That accounts for your being single then; men don't usually take to a girl who wears the breeches," said Hettie with a slur. "Perhaps, cousin Hettie, that is the reason," answered Diana while her eyes filled with a fire "and another is this: it is better to enjoy single bliss than double blister," and as she turned Mrs. Sutton said, "Mr. Gaynor let me introduce my sister, your cousin Diana." Mrs. Sutton spoke with a touch of pride in her voice and affection shown in her eyes. Diana held out her hand in welcome; he noticed they were well-cared-for hands, then he gazed into a frank open countenance. He thought in all his life he had never seen a face so beautiful. Hettie's description of Diana as a coarse, bold girl had left him unprepared for this vision of loveliness; her dark eyes still gleamed with a glare of anger. She was dangerously beautiful, this Diana; her face was flushed and radiant from the flush of heat from the stove over which she had been preparing a special dish for the cousins where Marie had found her. She had intended changing her dress and preparing for the guests but had been delayed in her cooking and after the arrival, she decided to appear as she was. The pink of her dress, was less charming than

her cheeks. Her raven hair was fastened back with pink roses, and where a stray lock fell down, it was captured back in place with pink roses; here and there a curl fell over the fair brow. Yet it was not only easy graceful movements that sent thrills of joy, and admiration through Gaynor; it was the eyes, the great dark piercing eyes, also the dimpled, square-set chin, that told of strength and power, and best of all, self-will; an intelligent frank open face. A smile lighted up the handsome face, revealing pearly, even teeth as she welcomed Gaynor. He never forgot Diana as she appeared that day. "Well cousin Gaynor, let us hope you will find the much needed rest here in our glorious Maine climate, and prepare you for the battle on your return for, of course, you will try again for Congress, won't you?" "I can't say, Diana, I am utterly lost! I may fail again and failure is bad medicine." "Fail! well what if you do fail! Keep on, if you fail a dozen times! It is decidedly better to be a cheerful failure than a morbid success.

CHAPTER IV

DIANA OFFENDED AT COUSIN GAYNOR

You can't tell a man's character by his clothes.

Can you imagine anything more delightful or charming than to wake in the morning from a dreamless refreshing sleep, to feel the pure balmy air from the fir trees wafted across your face, the sun casting glints of gold and silver over your bed, to step to the window, and wherever you look, to see beauties on every side; miles upon miles of fir trees, as they point heavenward with the small brown cross showing clear above the masses of green branches, the rise and fall of the mountain and valleys; the great lake, as it glittered in the bright rays of the sun; the quiet dreamy town, nestling in green fields, and back beyond the background of fir trees, wherever your eyes rested, it could distinguish the brown cross of the fir trees pointing upwards. Old Mt. Katahdin was in the distance, standing like a sentinel with its hoary head of white. Birds warbled anthems from the maple-trees near the window, darting hither and thither, from limb to limb; all the world seemed at rest and peace here. It was this scene that Gordon Gaynor awoke to the first morning in the Maine Woods.

Thomas B. Reed paid tribute to the good old State by the toast: "Here's to the State of Maine, the land of the bluest skies, the greenest earth, the richest air, the strongest and what is better still, the sturdiest men, the fairest and what is best of all, the truest women under the sun." It was the first time for weeks that Gaynor had felt in good spirits. Hettie, too, broke into merry peals of laughter as she and Marie Sutton wandered in the old-fashioned garden below; Carl joined them, and gathered some choice roses and was in the act of pinning them in Hettie's red locks when she cried, "Oh cousin don't! Please don't pin them in my hair. You never see that, only in the vulgar, ignorant class of people.

Flowers in the hair! Pin them in my belt, Carl! As Carl bent to pin the roses in Hettie's belt, his face was scarlet; he dropped the flowers. As he stooped to pick them up, he thought, "I must tell Diana about that, for she is forever putting flowers in her hair." His face was crimson, as he pinned the precious buds in her belt. Marie had turned away with a look of disgust on her dainty face thinking "Aunt Diana wears flowers in her hair and I guess her taste is just as good as cousin Hettie's. Marie was very devoted to her young Aunt and although her indolent ways often caused her Aunt to lecture her severely, she resented

the insinuation from cousin Hettie; she had noticed Hettie seemed harsh with Aunt Diana and she could not fathom why, for everybody else loved her Aunt. She did hope Cousin Gaynor would treat Auntie with more respect; if he did not they would answer to her for it; for was it not Aunt Di who gave her heart and mind to plan for their pleasure and comfort! Indeed it was. "What would we all do without Aunt Di, anyway?" she murmured aloud as she went out for the walk. Looking up, Marie beheld Pal with arms filled with pond lilies. He was dressed in a limp white shirt, with collar turned under, and a pair of very muddy pants, which proved he had no easy job to gather the beauties he held in his arms; he was rather a forlorn looking figure as Marie bumped into him. "Pal I know some of those beauties are for me. I beg your pardon Pal for the bump I gave you, I had not noticed you coming in the gate." "No I guess you did not the way you ran over me! Nobody 'round here notices me much anymore." He did not know just how many eyes were watching him or he would never have made that remark. "Where is Diana this morning, Marie?" asked Pal as he held the flowers out of dainty Marie's reach. "Aunt Di is helping in the kitchen as one of the maids is sick and one away on a vacation, and Aunt Di is taking both their

places! But Pal, some of the flowers are for me surely, aren't they?" "No Marie, not a single one unless you go in and fill Dianas' place and let her come out here. Then, and only then, will I let you smell them. Now run along and tell Diana I have something for her, and I will save you some of the best in the whole bunch." Marie caught a lily and laughingly said, "I will tell her now, Pal!" She ran up the walk and out into the kitchen, where she found Diana mopping up the floor. "Marie, see what you have done; put tracks all over my clean floor," cried Diana. "Oh Auntie I am so sorry, but I told Pal I would fill your place and let you go out to the walk. He wants to see you on important business and I told him you would come. At least, I hinted that you would come. I will do, won't I Maggie?" and she turned to the old cook. "Ye sure will, Miss Re if you stay in this kitchen. But run along, Diana child, sure and I kin manage now." "Go on Aunt Di for I told Pal you would come." She knew Pal would wait for Diana near the walk and she also knew that he would save her some of the fragrant flowers. Diana said, "Well why did he send you? Why didn't he come himself? I am too busy to run out to the walk," but at Marie's look of disappointment she turned to Maggie and gave directions regarding cousin Gordon and

Hettie's breakfast as she stated they were late getting down to breakfast, and that now they must have an early luncheon; then Diana ran lightly down the walk. Pal stood dreaming of Diana and thinking of her look of surprise, when her eyes would rest on the flowers; it was his offering, of which he was very proud for was it not almost impossible to gather them, as the water was too low to paddle a canoe to them, and the mud too deep around them, and he had only gathered a few choice ones by wading and pushing the canoe with one hand, and gathering the precious gems with the other. Pal's father was a well-to-do farmer, and George Duncan was his only son. Diana had christened him "Pal" while they were children. The name clung to him and he loved it. Mr. Duncan often told his wife Diana and George were as brother and sister and he hoped they would always feel the same towards each other, for they were not at all fitted for lovers; they were entirely different from lovers now; Diana was too learned for his boy. He had read of the learned women and he did not want his boy's life ruined, and he hoped they would always remain just good friends; but lately since the city guests had been gathering into Aunt Dorotha's, he had noticed a change in his boy's manners and he felt, that after all, the love he had dreaded for

his boy had ripened. As the days passed he could but feel pity for George when Diana was entertaining the guests, he understood how his boy's heart pained when he watched her start canoeing with the men from the city, especially the new Pastor who became very attentive to Diana in the last few months. Yes, Pal, was deeply in love and jealous too. Well he must learn the little lesson sooner or later and the sooner he learned it the better it would be for him, that there are still other fish in the great sea. As Diana beheld Pal with his arms filled with the precious flowers, she dashed down the walk and caught him by the shoulders and peered into his face with bright laughing eyes. "Pal, dear old Pal, why did you do this for me,—ruined your clothes and shoes both! You are always doing so much for me! I did want to gather some myself, and she clasped the white gems to her face and buried her face in their fragrance. "Aren't they lovely Pal? You are like them Pal; you prove your goodness day by day; and all along my life whenever I come across a lily of the lake, I shall think still that you are as good and pure as you are to-day."

"Please God you will never be disappointed in me, Diana, for I only want to please you! You never answered my question the other night Di. Can't you promise you will try to

love me? I would do anything for you Di." He reached for her hand and held it tight.

"Pal, I do love you but not in that way; I can never love you in that manner, and I want you to promise me never to think of loving me more than just a friend, or Pal we will become less than friends if I should make you the promise you request; for in that promise I would be acting a lie and in time you would detest me for it. I love you, Pal, as my chum of childhood days and I hope you will always remain the same Pal. Please promise me never to mention this again Pal. As he gazed into her lustrous eyes now so entreating his heart beat faster and it was some moments before he could answer; "Diana I will try to forget, but I cannot promise you pal." "Pal thank you so much for this, I know you can forget and we will still be the same friends to the end. Ora and her brother will be here this evening and I know you will come over and meet them, Ora is always interested in you, and I am sure you will enjoy her brother. I am so glad they are to join us here, I feel sure we will enjoy the pleasure trips when Ora is one of the party. Will you not come in and meet my cousins Pal?" No, indeed, not in this garb; I must hurry home and change and prepare to meet Ora, for as you state she is a charming girl and I owe her some courtesy

for entertaining me while in her town, I will join you all this evening. So long Diana dear old pal of mine, if I can be no nearer than a pal it is more than just a friend, and Di, remember a pal always has the right to protect, so if ever you need assistance come to me." As Pal passed out the gate, Diana stood and once more buried her face in the lilies; she murmured over and over again "dear old Pal." She did love him indeed she did; but she did not want to think of Pal as a lover. Her love included everything and everybody. Pal's changed ways of late had been a source of trouble to her; she did not want to hurt his great tender heart. From the window above Gordon Gaynor had watched the scene below, he had heard his wife's harsh voice regarding the roses Carl had offered; he felt rather amused at pretty Marie's indignation, it was amusing to see Marie, and at that moment she walked into the heart of Gaynor. He had noticed her indolence the evening before and had taken a dislike to Marie; the answer she had given her grandmother the day before had been noticed at once by him, and he felt disgusted with her. But now the love she showed her Aunt, opened his eyes to a different Marie. Hettie and Carl returned to the broad veranda and Hettie's harsh voice again came to him. "Where is Marie, the little fairy; too

bad Diana is not like her, for Marie is quite beautiful and such a fine jolly girl." "Yes indeed, she holds a place in all our hearts. My sister was saying the other day that she could not keep Marie home long enough to entertain their own guests. She delights in being near her grandmother, Diana is next to the Angels in Marie's estimation," said Carl. Why, oh, why, thought Gaynor, is Hettie so despicable to Diana, he could not help but notice from the first time Hettie had ever spoken of Diana, it was with anger and disgust as she told him of her rudeness and said she was coarse and full of faults when Diana was only a child. But if he could know the jealously in Hettie's heart when there ten years ago with May. Everybody loved Diana for her gentle disposition, while all, even to the rough laboring hands, had detested May for her deceit and the troubles she caused poor Diana: Hettie knew May had no friends at Aunt Dorotha's, and hated Diana for her even temper and goodness: Gaynor knew that Diana could never have answered to the description Hettie had given her, a rude tom-boyish girl, for her face told of refinement, her words now rang in his head; "Fail, well what if you do fail, a dozen times," they were a glimpse into the great mind of the girl. Now his eyes rested on the figure that Marie had nearly ran over. He

was a young man, poorly clad, very dirty pants and shirt and he held an armful of white flowers; he saw Marie run up the walk, then Diana quickly passed the window; he noticed the young man turn toward her, saw Diana dash with the grace of an athlete down the path, he saw to his dismay, her clasp the man's face between her hands, saw the man's face as it radiated with love, watched as Diana buried her face in the great masses of white flowers; and then her earnest expression as she talked and looked into the young man's face; then he saw the disgusted and dejected attitude of the man as she talked, the hand clasp as they parted, then he saw her gaze after him as he went down the walk; now she was wiping glistening tears away and turned toward the house. He hastened down to join the others below. Wonder and amazement had overspread his countenance, as he met the others with a good morning; Diana came up on the veranda, with her arms ladened down with water lilies. Such a fragrance as they threw on the air; Carl said "Diana who has been fool enough to risk miring in that mud to gather those lilies?" Aunt Dorotha gathered one and pressed it to her face, Diana tossed some to Hettie, Carl, and Gaynor; then she replied, "Pal! He said he did have a time to reach them, but I am glad he succeeded for

I was tempted to try for some myself." "I knew he was a fool, none but a fool would try to gather lilies in that mud; I can't see what you see in that man Di." Carl spoke bitterly. Hettie laughed and said, "Is he the dude Diana used to let carry her books to and from school? Who always wore clothes too tight or too large, and a boquet dangling from his buttonhole; the girl-boy I used to call him." Aunt Dorotha said smiling: "Yes that is the one; yet I don't believe he is much of a dude now as he was at that age. Gaynor looked at Diana and said, "If it was the gentleman that bestowed those beauties on Cousin Diana he cannot be accused of being a dude, I saw him as he entered the gate and fancied he was one of the field hands. Nevertheless the flowers are certainly worth risking a little stained clothing for, and I can't blame the young man for wanting to see the eyes of cousin sparkle when she beheld the flowers." As he spoke he gazed intently at Diana. Diana's face flushed scarlet above the white gems she held in her arms; Hettie and Carl burst into laughter as they beheld the rosy face of Diana, Gaynor saying in a low voice to Diana,"I am sorry cousin if he is anything to you, that I mentioned his appearance" and Gaynor bent toward her, as he saw the look of pain fill the dark eyes for a moment. Diana felt hurt for

she knew Carl liked nothing better than to hear Pal ridiculed, then her eyes flashed fire as she said, "I don't mind Cousin Gaynor, but he is something to me though a friend of childhood days, a playmate as a child, but please don't judge his character by his clothes; Pal has nerve and grit, for I have known of many who tried to gather the lilies and failed. Mr. Duncan is not that kind of person. When once he undertakes anything he will accomplish it. If he fails the first time, he is never daunted." she ran up the steps and into the house, where she came upon Marie and John seated in the parlor.

CHAPTER V.

MAGGIE AND AMOS WARN DIANA

"Have the courage to dare to be true at all times."

As Diana came upon Marie and John, she paused in surprise; she had expected to find Marie in the kitchen with Maggie, as she had promised so faithfully to fill her place. Diana had forgotten the moments had quickly passed while she stood out in the walk and talked with Pal. Her eyes sparkled and her face still

burned from the bantering she had endured on the veranda. John was watching Diana's flushed face and wondered why she looked so disturbed; it was not a usual thing for Diana to have even a trace of a frown. Gaynor's words regarding Pal hurt her and she was disappointed in him. To think that he would ridicule a stranger! He had seemed different from Hettie, he must be thoughtless and harsh too. Any way, she would not stand to hear Pal ridiculed before Carl. John caught Diana's shoulder and gave her a slight shake. "Wake up Di wake up! No time for dreaming of Hague! He will soon be here. Besides I am here now," and John threw back his head and with hands thrust into his pockets made an attempt to look dignified, which threw Marie and Diana both into hearty peals of laughter. Diana turned to Marie and said: "I thought you were to fill my place, and this is the way you do it. Did you ever see me sitting as close to John as you were? Did you ever see me lay my head on John's shoulder, with his lips close to mine? Oh, I caught you that time." Both John and Marie blushed deeply. Marie retorted, "I did fill your place in the kitchen until Maggie just made me leave, so now I have done my part, I just entered the parlor a moment or two before you came in. John was waiting to take me for a canoe ride. Can't you

come along with us? I heard Uncle Carl say he would take Grandma and the cousin's for a drive around town and show cousin Hettie the improvements. I'm glad of it for I did not want them with us. Hettie is always finding fault and I just don't like her! "Hush, hush," said Diana,—but Marie kept on. Now Aunt Di, I know she made you angry as you came in here for I saw it in your eyes, and she never can see the good side of anything." No, Marie, Hettie did not make me angry. It was because Gaynor and Carl wer ridiculing Pal. I can't understand why Carl and Musz. are so opposed to Pal for he is only a friend and neighbor. I can't see why they speak of him as a nobody; that was why I felt angry. Let's forget it all, and live above what anyone thinks of us or our friends." And Diana went down on the rug and spread the lilies in her lap as Marie and John watched her. "Here John, you arrange some, Marie you run in the kitchen and fill the vases with water and then pick out the ones you want for yourself. I am going to arrange some in Ora's room," she kept on, as she did not want to think any more of Pal. Marie went darting after the water, John seated himself on the rug by Diana's side and began to help her arrange the flowers. "So Ora is coming, is she? and Harry too! Well I certainly am glad for they will be a great

addition to the house party this year. Ora makes life jolly where she happens to be. John seemed to be as a member of the family, as he and dainty Marie, were engaged the Christmas, a year ago; he was the son of a sturdy farmer, and they were near neighbors. They all knew dainty Marie had fallen into good hands when she choose John for a life partner. He was very devoted to his sweetheart, and because Marie thought there was nobody quite so good as Aunt Di, John too, worshipped her and thought in all the world Diana had no equal! As the door from the kitchen opened to Marie they heard a voice in loud tones and filled with disgust come floating in, "Sure and be jabbers, its a foin man that can think for himself and say what he thinks, without wondering what his wife will say, or care whether she approves of it or not." Diana and John burst into laughter as the closing of the door cut out the angry voice of Maggie. It was some few moments before Marie returned and she was convulsed with laughter, "Oh, Aunt Di, you should hear Maggie and Amos complimenting our cousins. Amos says that cousin Gaynor deserves a medal for living with Hettie as long as he has and Maggie said why sure he do, and a medal big as a pumpkin at that Diana gathered up the lilies saying, "They must wait until later

on to discuss that, for John and I heard every word they said, when you opened the door just now, and she hastily withdrew to the kitchen. John handed Marie a bunch of the lilies he had arranged for her, and said, "Sometimes I just can't understand Aunt Di. I don't believe she understands herself. She treats Pal as if he were a friend only, and yet I believe Pal truly loves her. Just let anybody speak slightingly of Pal and how quick Aunt Di flies up over it. One would think she really loved him." "No," answered Marie, "Aunt Di don't want to marry anyone! She don't know what the real love is, like we do"—and Marie gave an impatient toss of her head. Then she went on: "All Aunt Di loves is the woods and rifle, and, of course, she loves dear old Grannie best of all. You know, John, what I mean. She has no place in her heart for anything else. She never said a word about coming canoeing with us, did she?" When Diana entered the kitchen she beheld a man of about fifty years of age. He looked as if he had been built from one of the great fir trees. He was tall and straight; his hair was an iron gray and his head was well covered with it; he had bright, keen eyes for a man of his age; the eyes lighted as they fell on Diana. He was standing in the middle of the floor, listening to Maggie, who was relating an escapade of May's when

ten years before. Diana carefully closed the door and stood with her hand on the knob. Maggie turned to her and said, "Sure, Miss Diana, and it's meself that knows. Why, your foin cousin can't stand for yer to be near her. I was just telling Amos of one of her antics when here ten years ago, and I am going to finish right now." Maggie raised her hand in threatening gesture as she continued, "Yer see, it was like this: the lady she says to me, 'Maggie, the eggs are getting rather scarce and I wish you would cut them out as much as you can in yer cooking.' Well, I saved them for some time and had planned a foin dish I would be giving the lady one of these mornings and surprise her. Well, I was just telling Amos: one day I left the kitchen for a few moments and when I returned there was that scalapean May up by the shelf a-punching holes in the eggs and blowing the insides out into the slop bucket; sure, and I just yelled at her to git or I'd skin her, and the little devil she up with the basket of eggs and threw them at me. Sure, and for a few moments I could not see, for the eggs broke into millions of pieces and streamed down over my face. The little devil she clapped her hands and laughed at me. I was at a rush for her when Miss Hettie comes in at the door. I caught her sash and tore it into shreds just as Miss Hettie called in her

sweet voice, 'May, dear, what are you doing in here?' When she caught sight of me she bu'st out laughing ond says she, 'May, dearie, what happened to Maggie?' Now, what do you think that little devil said? She says, bold as you please, 'Diana spilled all of Aunt Dorotha's eggs and then she runned away.'

"Miss Hettie, with one of her sweet looks, turned to May and saw the torn sash. She gave me another one of her sweet looks and went in to the old lady and says she, 'Auntie, you should just go see what that child Diana has been a-doing to Maggie.' I would have offered to assist Maggie, but I thought she might object to a stranger interfering. Sure and she knew Maggie. And be jabbers, if ever she let that sister of hers come back to the kitchen, it was me that never knew it. I was just waiting me time to skin her; yes, I intended to beat the skin off her. Sure, and by faith the good lady she came into the door and she saw me with the eggs a-streaming down over me face and me hair the color of gold. The yolks and whites covered me face complete. I sure was a sorry sight."

Diana was shaking with laughter from head to feet, and old Amos joined her until the tears fell over his weather-beaten face. Maggie could not help but smile as she watched them; but she also was very angry, and when she

thought of that time again her eyes glared, and she continued, "Sure, the good lady says Diana must be punished for this, and she left the room before I had time to explain to her. But the old gent he soon comes around and then I up and tells him the whole truth about it. He says ,'Well, Maggie, our little girl won't be punished for that, you can rest on that,' and I felt better then, for I knew the old gent. He did not have any love for that little tike, but I never forgot the little devil, and to this day I sure would like to beat the skin black and blue on her. 'Tis a sorry day when Miss Hettie comes here, for Maggie—I can hardly cook her eatings.. 'Tis the devil's own she is; and sure, wasn't she just a-putting it into Carl's head to forbid Pal to enter the gate? Sure, Margie heard her. She says, 'Diana should not associate with such people, and if she prefers such friends she should not tie them onto the family apron strings.' Sure, and she is trying to stir up a storm the first thing!"

Diana's face flushed as she heard Maggie's words, but she said, "Hush, Maggie, hush; she is my cousin and you should not speak so disrespectfully of her. Besides, she has not met Pal yet, and when she does she will change her mind regarding him."

Maggie did not like this resentment and she turned and snapped out, "You watch her, Miss

Di; watch her close. She sure do be the devil's own."

Old Amos turned away, saying, "Maggie, be more careful how you talk. If the old Satan ever did come around, it might be some other besides Miss Hettie that he would take." "Me, to be sure," said Maggie, "for he is sure of her anyway. Mr. Gaynor he do be a foin man sure, and by faith he said, says he, 'Hettie, I imagine our cousin is capable of choosing her own friends, and perhaps as she said to me, "A man's clothes don't make the man," and I would advise Carl to not interfere with Diana's friends, although if Pal were forbidden to enter the grounds she could meet him other places and it might mean more to her.'"

"Hush, Maggie, I say. I don't care what they say; it is nothing to me. Cheer up, Maggie, and let's don't talk of such things. You know Ora is coming to-morrow and we all love her, you know." She walked over to the old gardener and, laying her hand on his arm, she said, "You will be glad to see Ora, won't yer?" The old man saw the look of sadness in the dark eyes. "Indeed, I will be glad to see the girl. She is one of your own style. But listen to me, little girl. I feel as Maggie has said, a storm brewing through Miss Hettie's doings. Miss Di, be true to yourself. Remember that honesty is not only the best policy, but the

only policy; so be true to yourself, little girl, at all times, and all will be well."

CHAPTER VI.

GAYNOR'S AWAKENING.

"Cheerfulness lends to length of days and days
that are worth the lengthening."

After Marie and John had gone canoeing Diana fairly flew from room to room, setting things to rights. At last she was free to go wherever she chose, so she took her faithful Winchester rifle, and back to the woods she darted under the great fir branches and threw herself down and breathed a prayer of relief and gratitude, as she was free to think and plan.

She wondered how she could treat Cousin Gaynor with respect or even friendliness after his harsh words concerning Pal. She felt when she met him that behind his face there was kindness and strength, but he had not proven either one. She wondered if living with Hettie had made him harsh, too. It seemed to have influenced him, anyway, she thought. As Diana mused she thought she heard a rattling

in the leaves and raised herself quietly up, which betrayed in her the true huntress; but nothing more was heard or could be seen. She once more fell back 'neath the firs and fell to dreaming of Ora. She was surprised to hear a voice close by saying, "Cousin Diana, do you allow an intruder into your sanctum?" She jumped to her feet and saw Gordon Gaynor.

"Why, Cousin Gaynor, I thought you were driving over the streets of our beautiful city." "No, Mrs. Sutton arrived just as they were about to start and Hettie wanted her to accompany them, so I told Carl I would enjoy a walk around the farm and take the drive with him on the morrow. I saw your pink dress as it fluttered in the breeze and I followed, as I wanted to see you especially for a few moments." "But, Cousin, what if it had been somebody else's pink dress you had followed?"

Diana's eyes sparkled as she pictured his surprise at discovering somebody else in the pink dress. She looked up at him as he stood looking down at her. "But it was not altogether the pink dress that caused me to follow on. It was the easy, light carriage of the athlete that proved it was my cousin Diana. May I sit down in this little haven?" He smiled into her eyes as she nodded. "I wanted to apologize for my rudeness to you this morning in regard to your friend Pal. I presume

he could teach us fellows a few lessons, as you stated, Cousin Diana. If he is to become my cousin I want him to be worthy of our Diana; hey, cousin mine?" and he seated himself on the seat of the firs and pine needles at Diana's feet. She sank down on the pine needles opposite him. "Pal is not a lover, Cousin Gaynor; he is just a good friend, a 'Pal,' as I told you, and I am very fond of him. I cannot hear a friend of mine ridiculed without it making me very angry. I felt hurt, too, that you could ridicule one you did not even know. But never mind about it any more, Cousin Gaynor; yet I am so glad you have said what you have. It places us on a better footing. What about our little place here? Do you think you are going to enjoy the Maine woods?" "Yes, indeed," he answered, gazing straight into her eyes, "I have learned what I knew nothing of before. None of us are too old or too wise to learn something new."

His voice drifted away into the silence; Diana waited for him to go on, but he sat gazing into her face. He did not explain what he had learned. Since meeting Diana he had learned he had a heart that beat faster when he gazed into the depth of those dark, deep eyes of Diana. "Cousin Gaynor, this is a great place to dream here," she said as she noticed his far-away expression. "You are a great

lover of nature, aren't you, Cousin Diana? I have never before been as close to nature. I love the massiveness of your great country. I had dreamed of Maine as a great wilderness—Hettie always spoke of it as such—and then the log cabin at the St. Louis fair made the impression of its backwoodsness."

It was then that Diana's eyes flashed fire. "It makes me really angry whenever I think of that log cabin, Cousin Gaynor! It did not represent the progressiveness of our State. It was an injustice. Why didn't they send a sanatarium, built of the great Mt. Waldo granite and filled with the balsam of the fir trees; to have pictures of our great Maine statesman there; to have the fir pillows in every nook and cranny, to prove to the world that Maine can cure that dreaded of all diseases, consumption. Oh, Cousin Gaynor, there was so much more to show the world than that log cabin represented. Look at our grand old trees that could have been put to some use. The very best of all is the fir trees. Why didn't they tell the world of our fir trees and what they will do for a man? Just the true worth of the firs alone would have meant so much more than that log cabin." "Cousin, do you believe the fir trees can cure consumption? The fir balsam that is surrounding this little nook here?" asked Gaynor. "Do I believe it? I know it.

I have seen consumption cured here; I have seen consumptives carried into the Maine Woods, and in a very short time I have seen the same ones roam over our hills and through our valleys, hunting, and return to the cities well and happy. That is what the Maine Woods will do for the people who are ill and worn out with that dreaded of all diseases. I tell you, Cousin Gaynor, people do not know what good there is in the balsam of the fir trees. Yet the fir cushions are delivered from Maine to California; such tiny little cushions, too, Cousin Gaynor; it really seems a pity that people can't have more of it than they do. That is just what I mean about that log cabin. Ask any physician who knows of its true worth, and he will tell you what it will do. Then the Maine Woods also offers the whole world a place to come to fish, hunt, and sport; but that is not all the Maine Woods offers the great old world." "No, indeed, it is not," broke in Gaynor; "it offers to teach a man that life is worth living after all, and Maine offers much more than I can mention now; but I am learning, although I am only an amateur. I am learning things that I never knew existed before."

He paused and gazed at her. "The fir trees do have an inspiring, invigorating effect on one, Cousin Diana; I don't know just how to

express the feeling. It wafts a gleam of contentment over one." "I know what it is, Cousin Gaynor. Let me tell you the legend of the fir trees. You see, the Canadian people are a very superstitious people and they cling to this legend and believe in it fully to this day: The fir trees are blessed, they claim, by our Savior; they say Christ was crucified on a cross made of the fir trees, and He left the power to cure all ills. You notice that brown cross pointing upward. Look, Cousin Gaynor." Diana's eyes rested on the top of a massive fir tree. "You see, Cousin Gaynor? They say that is the message the fir tree imparts, upward, always upward. To help each other as He commanded we should do; it cures diseases, too; I do know that myself, Cousin Gaynor. They say the balmy breeze carries the message to every man, woman and child whenever they come near the fir trees. They learn it is a message from the All Father to draw us upward to where we may be with Him forever. That is, we profit by the lessons taught through the great fir trees. Then again you notice the little cross on the tip of every little branch, Cousin; it is 'the sign of the cross'; that little cross on the tip of the branch is what is used to make the noted fir pillows. The little pillows, just twelve inches square, sell for fifty cents. You see the fir

trees must have some merit, or why is it that the fir cushions are in such demand even by people who have never seen the fir trees? I have noticed the fir cushions in homes that did not even know what the fir tree looked like or where they come from. There is a something in the balsam that brings us sinners a sense of peace and contentment. Now, Cousin Gaynor, don't you thing a great, massive structure of the granite, with the emblem of the fir tree, and what it would mean to the afflicted, oh, just what that alone would mean, the fir tree, with its cross pointing heavenward, telling all afflicted with that dreaded of all diseases — consumption — that there was hope and cure free in the balsam of the fir tree, and what it would have meant to our old State, the reputation of curing the afflicted and sending back to the world strong men, women, and children, because this remedy would be free, as Christ wants all relief to be, to the afflicted? New York has built wonderful buildings of the Mt. Waldo granite, and Maine would have been far better represented by such, I am thinking, instead of the log cabin."

Diana paused and let her eyes rest lovingly on the great fir trees that surrounded her retreat. Gaynor also sat in deep thought. At last he broke the silence. "Diana, I hear you are expecting many guests. A Rev. Hague is

to be one of the party, I understand, and I am wondering if Pal won't have cause to become jealous of his comrade," Gaynor laughingly remarked, while blushes covered Diana's face. "I am very sorry, if that is the Rev. Hague's quest here, for I am a very wild bird, and wild birds are not easily captured. You know Cousin Hettie says, men do not care for a tom-boy girl. I am just enough of a tom-boy to refuse to become a minister's wife. If Cousin Hettie is right, a preacher should care less than the common run of men. I don't care about marrying."

Gaynor was glad to hear her say this. If he were only free to try and find a way to this girl's heart; she was so truthful, so frank in all that she said, it seemed she hid nothing from him. How refreshing it was! Oh, if he were only free!

Diana, too, was dreaming again; she was so glad that Cousin Gaynor proved as satisfactory a guest as she had at first taken him to be. What had the Maine Woods taught him, she wondered. Again she would like to know if he and Hettie were happily married, or was Hettie the harsh woman to him that she had proven herself to everybody else. She would like to know truthfully if he really loved Cousin Hettie; she would want her husband to love her at all times, and somehow it did

not seem genuine—this love of her cousin's.

"Cousin Gaynor," she said, "tell me of your work in the political life. I am so ignorant of it all, and yet I have always felt that if I were a man I should want to do something for our country and its people."

Now Diana became very serious as she looked into Gaynor's face. He stood leaning against the trunk of a pine tree, and his eyes rested upon the earnest questioning face of the girl. Here in the midst of the great wilderness he found one interested in his work—not for the money in it, but what it meant for the people; the motive for which he worked, his platform, what it would have meant to the people had he been lucky enough to have been elected, and what it would have meant to him. Diana waited his answer, as he stood silently regarding her. "I wonder just how to tell you, Cousin Diana, what my election would have meant; I cannot make it all clear to you yet, but the first thing, I worked for the election to become better known. Then I had planned, if I were lucky enough to become elected, to do what came to me to act on, in as satisfactory a way as was in my power to the public, so in this manner it would mean my re-election and——" "But, Cousin Gaynor, what party did you run for?" questioned Diana quietly as Gaynor stammered on. "I have read, and read,

until it is all kind of muddled in my brain. John is for the Democratic party, then Carl is for the Republican, and my father was a Prohibitionist in his time. I have heard them all discuss their policies, then I have been reading of the Socialist party. It seems they all claim to be the only party for the working people, yet they all are as different as day is from night. They are all Americans; or I should have said, all for America. Cousin Gaynor, politics has always reminded me of the churches—all working for the one goal, all going different ways, and pushing, and criticising each other. It seems to me it would be much better to join together and help find a remedy. If there really is a better way, why don't they help find it? Instead of that, they are all abusing each other, and it seems they have no thought of the nation's welfare. All they seem to care for is to be prominent men. When they really do find one who means something to the poorer class of people, why, they take his life, as they did Presidents Lincoln and McKinley. See how they took their precious lives, and when President Roosevelt filled President McKinley's chair they did everything they could to prevent him from carrying on President McKinley's unfinished work; but that was one time they failed, for Theodore Roosevelt is not easily daunted

when he feels he is in the right. I admire him for the easy way he turned from the critics and slowly and steadily kept on as his great mind dictated. He has grit, and the best of all, good brains. Another reason I admire President Roosevelt is this — he loves Maine, he pays tribute to dear old Maine, and the very best of all, he knows of what he speaks, for he spent some time on a hunting or sporting trip to Maine, at Mattwamkeag Lake, when he was a young man; and since then he comes back to Maine—and he knows, notices, and praises all of our improvements. Because of his love for nature I know he is a grand man. I have tried to think for myself, but somehow I cannot get it all straightened out in my mind; my brain is too small, I expect. I was reading the Socialist politics the other day and their talks of what would be best for the nation's poor people, and it really made me cry when I read of the terrible things that happen to the poor people. I only wish I might help the poor people who are struggling for their daily bread, when not able to work in the great old factories, but it is work or starve. I can't understand why every man in the U. S. A. is not requested to study the men who are put up for election, to know just what they really will mean to the welfare of the people if they are given the vote. But no, they go

into the voting booth with never a thought for the future. Sometimes it reminds me of the race-track, this race for the different parties. It is enough to make our Pilgrim fathers turn in their graves, could they see some of the men who fill the offices and run our great nation."

Gaynor stood gazing into the girl's face as she went on in her soft voice, so earnest, so true. His face flushed from crimson to purple, then became pale and set. He thought Hettie said politics were not known at her aunt's, but here before him was a young girl trying to grasp the problems of our great nation—yes, what had he meant to the nation, had he been elected, now he felt ashamed of the conceit in which he had bound himself. "Cousin Gaynor, you explain it all to me."

Diana looked up at his set cold face as he awoke to what he really did mean to the people in general. He could not answer this fairy of the woods yet. "Won't you enlighten me in the work, Cousin Gaynor?" she went on, as she noticed the sad look in his eyes. "You are one of the men who help to make our great nation, you know." "Well, Cousin Diana, before many years you will be one of the women also, for it won't be long now before you have the vote, at least that is what the suffragists say." "I don't want to vote, Cousin Gaynor,

but I do so want to understand it all so if I ever should have a son of my own I could impress on his mind the true way to vote. But, Cousin Gaynor, if you won't tell me now, some time you must tell me all about your work, for I do want to understand." Gaynor said, "Well, Cousin Diana, I am not very well posted myself on what would be best for the people in general, but if ever I find a way to be of use to the public, I will remember what you have said and try and take the poorer classes into consideration also, and then I may feel that I have accomplished something worth while. Diana, girl, I never thought of how utterly useless I am to the public. After this awakening, I intend to profit by what I have learned to-day. Little girl, you have a great head on those shoulders of yours. I wish to God some of us men had a heart and head like yours!" "Cousin Gaynor, I don't understand why you won't tell me something about your work. I know you were not elected, but why don't you talk about what you planned to do if you had been elected?" "Some time I will tell you, little girl, but not to-day, for I want you to think as well of me as you can—"

Diana sat waiting with a questioning look in her dark eyes. She was sure Cousin Gaynor had great plans to help the people; she decided it was best not to remind him of the

failure, much as she would like him to tell her of what his party meant to the old U. S. A. "Well, Cousin Gaynor, when I vote it will be for the coming party," and she then said, looking at her watch, "I must return to the house, and I haven't even spied a partridge yet. The rest has meant more to me than the hunting."

Gaynor jumped toward her to assist her to arise, but she was on her feet before he caught her hand. As she clasped his hand she said, "I like you, Cousin Gaynor, indeed I do." Gaynor bent his head until his lips touched her forehead, and answered, "I am very proud of my cousin, too. She is learning to help the nation now and also teaching me a new life."

He let her hand drop, then picked up her Winchester rifle, and in silence they returned to the house. They found the others had also returned from their drive, and Hettie was in great spirits, as the Rev. Hague had arrived. He and Carl were sitting on the veranda as Diana and Gaynor came in at the gate. It was a livelier man who entered the gate than the one who had entered the evening before. Gaynor had improved in spirits since entering Aunt Dorotha's mansion the day before. Hettie called to them as she saw Diana start to the side door. She knew it was to escape the Rev. Hague. So she called to Diana, and then the Rev. Hague darted down the walk toward

them. "Well, well, I am pleased to find you looking so happy, Miss Varden, but where have you left the game?" "In the woods," said Diana, blushing furiously, as she turned to introduce her Cousin Gaynor. Then the three walked up the walk together, Rev. Hague's face beaming in happiness as he walked by Diana, and it was easy to see Diana was the object of his visit.

When they were all seated on the veranda, Aunt Dorotha inquired of Diana if she were going to meet the train, or the night express, for Ora and Harry. But before Diana could answer Marie came rushing in, crying, "Oh, Aunt Di, aren't you going to meet Ora?" "Why to be sure." She darted up to her room, where she hastily prepared to go meet her friends.

As they passed Mr. Duncan's, Pal joined them. When they crossed the street they came face to face with Ora and Harry Maxwell. Pal shook hands timidly with the sister, then he gave Harry a hearty handclasp and turned and picked up one of the suit-cases and Diana and Marie kissed Ora. Harry's face sparkled with mischief as he caught Marie and kissed her cheek, saying, "Oh, you tempter, giving Ora all the sweets." Marie gave him a resounding slap on the ears as she said, "Harry Maxwell, you mean thing; it was all Aunt

Diana's fault, for she began it." "Well, so it was," said Harry, "and I get mine right now," and with that he clasped Diana's face between his hands and lightly touched her brow with his lips.

It was a merry crowd that wended their way to Aunt Dorotha's. Marie and Harry were ahead, with Pal at their side, talking gayly. Diana and Harry Maxwell followed them. Harry was tall, refined bearing, dark brown eyes that sparkled with mischief. He was generally known as a good fellow. Diana walked by his side, laughing gayly. It was the first time Marie had heard the old familiar laughter since Hettie's arrival. Ora was as dainty as a princess and sweeter than an opening flower. She wore a large picture hat—the soft, white feathers fell gracefully to her shoulder; then her great rings of curls of purest gold color fluttered beneath the hat. She was a girl of about twenty-four years of age, round, dimpled face and about Diana's height; she was attractive and jolly at all times, which made her a favorite wherever she went; she plainly showed she was very fond of Pal. He appeared a different man when in her company; he was tastefully dressed in a business suit, and was perfectly at ease with Ora or Diana, but in the presence of others he was awkward and had a distant shrinking into him-

self that made him appear backward. Aunt Dorotha was waiting for them at the gate. Harry and Ora both kissed the aged face; then Harry linked his arm in hers and the others followed them to the veranda, where they joined the others. All evening cheerful laughter could be heard until the bells chimed out midnight.

CHAPTER VII.

THE UNWELCOME GUEST

"A man's good breeding is the best security against other people's ill manners."—Chesterfield.

Marie came dashing up the stairs into Diana's room the morning after Ora and Harry had arrived; she had two letters in her hand. "Marie, do for mercy sake hush, you will wake everyone up that is in the house! You know how late they were in getting to bed, too, After that journey they need the sleep." "Oh, do they?" mocked Marie, "and what about me. Here you rolled me out before I ever got sleeping good, and I guess I was up as late as the others, too, and I expect you needed the

sleep as much as they did also, but you won't own up to it. Anyway, here are some letters for you," and Marie threw herself on the couch, then pulled pillows around her, and closed her eyes. Diana seated herself in a large chair and began reading her letters. As she opened one, a frown came over her brow.

"Aunt Diana, what it is now?" asked Marie. Diana folded the letters and tossed them on the table. "Aunt Di, Aunt Di, wake up; your eyes said that letter contained something unpleasant; now, what is it?" "Oh, nothing much, Marie, girlie," she said tenderly, "except the letter is from Della, and she says she, Bessie and Viola Ditson of Chicago will be here on the morning train. You remember Viola. Well, Viola has a friend due to visit her in Chicago this week, and she has sent her word to join her here, and she will remain the month through with Della here," and Diana sighed. "Well, of all the nerve," said Marie. Yes, dainty Marie knew Viola, and at the thought of her now she kicked a cushion across the room and uttered the undignified "Oh, pshaw!" Marie had no love for Viola, neither did Diana. Viola had visited them before while with Della and she had proven a very unpleasant guest. She was the only daughter of a Chicago banker and seemed to be a spoiled child of wealth—a fault-finding,

heartless girl, very selfish in all her acts. She made light of the old-fashioned home and the ways of Aunt Dorotha. She had infatuated Carl, and caused him to make many changes around the home that displeased Diana and Grannie. She slurred Aunt Diana all the time. She was as bad as Hettie, in dainty Marie's estimation. And now a friend of hers was also coming. Uncle Carl could take Viola off their hands, but here was another coming, perhaps worse than Viola.

"Aunt Diana," exclaimed Marie, "let Bessie and I look after her and if ever she returns here my name is not Marie Sutton," and Marie looked ready to burst with laughter. Diana well knew the recklessness of Cousin Bessie and Marie when they were together, and she said, "No, no, Marie, be a lady in your own home, no matter what others are, and let's hope that Viola has changed. Carl said he had invited Lawyer Smith, also Ray Brewer, and we forgot all about Viola and her friend. I presume Della can't refuse her anything, but if it comes too close, I can," and Diana's lips closed firmly.

Presently the door opened and Mrs. Sutton entered. "Hello, Sis," said Diana as she drew a chair forward for her sister. Mrs. Sutton was always quiet and gentle. Diana brought a hassock and placed it at her sister's feet;

then she poured out the tale of her worries. "There is nothing to do, you see, sister, for they will be here to-day," said Diana.

Mrs. Sutton gazed thoughtfully for a few moments, then she said, "Diana, dear, Della was very thoughtless in this, for Viola made mother grieve and worry while here before, and we cannot have that again, you know. Viola must learn to keep her place better. Diana, dear heart, I was talking with Dr. Smith this morning and he seems very doubtful of mother's heart; you know, and I know, that she is failing fast, dear, and I can't understand why Carl can't see it and save her from the worry of Viola," and Mrs. Sutton's eyes filled with tears.

"With Ora, Harry, and Ray I think you can keep them so busy that they won't have time to worry mother," she went on, "for I don't believe that Ray is ever still. You do the best you can, Diana. I will look after mother's comfort. Plan trips that will take them away from the house as much as possible. Perhaps after all Viola's friend will be a more pleasant guest than Viola." Mrs. Sutton paused in astonishment as Marie threw the letters across the room, exclaiming, "Oh, shucks on Della, Viola, and the whole shooting match. I can tell you right now I don't intend to put myself out to entertain them.

As Maggie says, they are the devil's own!" "Marie, Marie, for shame! I guess if Diana can treat them respectfully you can, and what is more, you must do so, to save grandma and keep things quiet and peaceful. I ran down to see if I could assist you this morning, Diana. I will go in and see if mother is awake and tell her of Della's letter."

Mrs. Sutton opened the door, then turned to Diana and said, "Ask Ora, Harry, Bessie, and Ray Brewer to help you, especially in looking after Viola. Be truthful to them, explain why, Diana," and she closed the door quietly. Marie said, "Say, Aunt Di, you explain to Ora and Harry and I will explain to Bess and Ray. Promise, Aunt Di, may I?" "Why, certainly I will be glad for you to," answered her Aunt.

She left Marie gazing smilingly at the ceiling as if something very amusing was going on up there. As she hustled into the kitchen Maggie was giving orders to the help concerning the work for the day. Amos sat down a basket of apples on the table and Diana exclaimed, "Oh, what beauties, Amos. It is rather a task for you to pick them, is it not?" "Yes, Diana, it is, but Mr. Gaynor picked these for me as he passed back to the woods." She was surprised to know Cousin Gaynor was up so early, and wondered why. Maggie broke in, "To be sure, foin man he is, and didn't he

come in the kitchen and help himself to drink out o' my tin cup? Sure, and he do be a foin man. I expect that wife of his talks in her sleep, and poor man was glad when the sun awakened him. Sure, and it do be Maggie that pities him. Old Amos said he knew of a story they told on a friend of mine whose wife talked and found fault all the time. She took a bottle of patent medicine, and the next time the man went to purchase more, he said the medicine is all right, 'since taking the medicine my wife can't talk; I want two more bottles.' If I were Gaynor I would try to discover some of that medicine. Ha! Ha!"

Diana burst into a merry peal of laughter, in which Maggie and Amos joined her. They turned and saw Ora standing in the door. Maggie's face beamed with pleasure and Amos stood twirling his hat in his hand. Amos looked timidly in her face. "'Tis a foin pair ye do make, the two of yer," he said. Diana caught Ora around the waist, and the girls passed out through the kitchen, and Diana said hurriedly, "I want you all to myself for a while before the others come." She led the way to the lilacs; they nestled beneath the branches to a cosy little seat that Amos had made for Diana. When they were seated, Diana told Ora confidently of Viola and her rash actions. She poured out in heartfelt tones of

her mother's failing and Ora in sympathetic words promised to help entertain Viola and her friend, so as to save the gentle old lady, whom she, too, loved next to her own mother. When they had told all their girlish joys and sorrows to each other, they returned to the house. They found the other guests awaiting them on the veranda; Carl was entertaining Hettie, as usual, while Harry was talking with Rev. Hague and Aunt Dorotha. Marie and Mrs. Sutton sat quietly by and listened to Aunt Dorotha tell them of how queer her Diana's disposition was—it seems that she cared only for boating, hunting, and the woods for company. As Ora and Diana came upon the veranda even Hettie noticed what a beautiful picture they made. Diana's flashing black eyes, olive skin, with cheeks like the roses in her hair. Ora with her sweet smile, blue eyes, and golden crown. Rev. Hague pulled two chairs forward, then as Ora stepped upon the veranda he offered her one, and she drew it near him, and asked him of his work in Essex, while Harry measured off part of his chair, saying to Diana, "You can have a part of my chair." They all laughed merrily. Diana walked over toward Carl and Hettie and said, "I have fine news for you, Carl. I received a letted from Della, and she says they will come in on the morning train. Listen

here, Carl," she said as he was looking toward the lake, "you have never heard one word of what I'm telling you. Viola is to be with them." Carl started with a light shining over his face, and the cold eyes gave a kindlier look into Diana's. "Viola coming — when?" "I have just been telling you," returned Diana; "they are coming on the morning train—Della, Bessie, and Viola; you and Cousin Hettie go meet them, while Marie and I entertain the others, will you?" "To be sure, we will," replied Hettie cheerfully. She delighted being with Cousin Carl; he understood her—or she fancied he did. "Where is Gordon, Hettie dear?" inquired Aunt Dorotha. "I can not tell you, auntie, as he was gone when I awoke."

Gordon Gaynor at that moment was back 'neath the fir trees in Diana's sanctum, as he chose to call it, dreaming of all she had told him the day before. The inspiration, through the mind of this girl, caused him to look and reach out for something better and higher. He must be true to himself, to be worthy even to be near her.

It seemed that she filled every nook in that home. Rev. Hague worshipped her, Pal loved her, and Harry Maxwell said little, but the eyes that followed her every move spoke far plainer than words. Yet, she seemed heart free, kindness unto them all, he included.

Even Hettie's harsh treatment only called out kindness in every turn. Yes, she was a diamond in the rough—no, not in the rough, for many city girls with every opportunity were not as polished as Diana of the Maine Woods; no, in all the world there was not another just like this girl.

He must get back to the house or they would wait breakfast on him, and he did not want to be an inconvenience. So he hastened back through the field, just as Hettie and Carl emerged from the dining-room. "We could not wait on you, Cousin Gaynor," said Carl, and he seemed to be in great spirits; "we are to meet some more guests this morning. Hettie and I are chosen to meet them—you don't object, do you?" "Oh, no, indeed, I am glad to have my wife in such good hands."

Mrs. Sutton met him and led the way to the dining-room. A jolly-looking young man turned to meet him. He was a good-natured chap of about twenty years of age, and a clown in his speech and movements. "So glad to meet you, Mr. Gaynor; trust you can help me to keep this crowd more quiet. Ever since my arrival they have made so much fuss that Mrs. Varden will run us all out. Besides, I am nearly starved. Not a word have they said about my eating a mouthful." "Why, Ray Brewer, you have not stopped long enough to

give us a chance to get one word in," said Diana with sparkling eyes. "Set that suitcase down and join cousin at the table, for we want to get out in the fresh air. I was just thinking I would have to eat two meals to keep Cousin Gaynor company." "Oh, never mind about the two meals, Miss Diana, watch me—I can eat three right now."

The guests arose as Gaynor and Ray seated themselves at the table. They all left the dining-room but Diana, who came and bent over Gaynor and said, "I know where you were, Cousin Gaynor." She sniffed the air. "You have been back to the fir nook." She turned and joined the others on the veranda. Hettie, Carl, and three girls were seen coming, also a gentleman who had a pale face, dark hair, and heavy dark eyes. He was of medium height. Carl introduced him as Lawyer Smith. Bessie was short, a jolly, good-natured girl of about Marie's age. Della, tall, slender, stoop-shouldered girl, near Diana's age, while Viola was medium height, pale-faced girl, with pale blue eyes. She was dressed in the height of fashion; she walked by Carl's side. When she reached the veranda, she gave all the tips of her fingers as a welcome, then requested to be shown to her room at once. Marie and Diana led the way up the broad stairs. Marie and Bessie were chatting like two magpies.

Diana led the way to a cozy room and said, "Della, you and Viola can step in here and Marie will take Bessie with her." Viola cast herself down in a large arm chair, then she arose and looked about her. "Oh, my, how uncomfortable. Can't you give me an upholstered chair, Diana? That old willow rocker gives me the shivers!" Without a word Diana left the room and soon returned with a large upholstered leather chair. "Everything is so hopelessly old-fashioned here," went on Viola. "You should get out in the world, Diana, and see how other people live; then you could arrange things more stylishly." Diana's face flushed as she said, "Oh, this place, although old-fashioned, seems to suit many besides ourselves, which goes to prove that old-fashioned things pay and please people." Della had taken off her wraps, and was hanging them up, while Viola found fault; she now turned to Viola and urged her to hurry up. Marie and Bessie were on their way to the dining-room to let Ray into their plans. Marie had it already planned out just what they were to do with Viola. When she entered the dining-room she carefully closed the door and introduced Bessie to Gaynor. Ray leaped up from the table and made a deep courtesy to Bessie, exclaiming, "Charmed, charmed, indeed charmed." Marie went over beside Gaynor

and said, "You won't tell on me, will you, cousin? But, you know, Miss Viola has been here before and she made us all very uncomfortable, and especially Aunt Diana. We want to save Aunt Di and have a little plan all worked out. We want to get Ray to help us, and now you won't tell on us, will you?" "No, Marie, but I will help you if you need me." Then Marie and Bessie both began talking at once to Ray. "Hold on here, one at a time! I am no Mormon." They wanted Ray to fall hopelessly in love with Viola, and when she was not in Carl's care for them to always let Ray know. He was to get her awakened to something besides finding fault. "Leave her to me, and I will awaken her all right."

Just then the doors opened and the girls with Diana entered the room. Diana made Gaynor and Ray acquainted with Viola; then she placed them at the table, and Diana thought she had never seen Ray so polite. Viola began, "Diana, is this all you have prepared for us? You know I cannot eat French toast, and I must have chocolate, too, dear." Gaynor started to speak, then closed his lips firmly and begged to be excused; he went to join the others. Diana had smiled, but he saw an expression of pain cross the fair brow. Yes, dainty Marie's secret was safe in his keeping, and he felt she had chosen wisely in a

co-worker when she had chosen Ray Brewer. He felt Ray's words conveyed more than he had said. He smiled to think of the way Ray had pulled her chair for her, and then as his nose came in contact with Viola's hair he had made a terrible face at Bessie and Marie. Yes, Marie was wise in seeking Ray's help, he felt sure. He admired little Bessie; she, like Marie, was perhaps thoughtless, full of life; at any rate they would have some pleasure in watching Ray's maneuvers. Gaynor seated himself by the Rev. Hague and asked if he were stationed at Essex. "Not as yet," said Rev. Hague, "but later I may be. I am only here for the season. I should like this place permanently. A fine town this, Mr. Gaynor." Harry reached over and caught Aunt Dorotha's hand, saying, "Yes, indeed, Mr. Gaynor, fine people in this little town." Harry was a great favorite with Aunt Dorotha, for he was the son of her girlhood friend, Mrs. Maxwell. They had been schoolmates, their friendship was binding and true, as time had proven. Aunt Dorotha pressed the man's hand as she smiled into his face. So like Annie Maxwell, this boy! The Rev. Hague answered, "True, enough, Mr. Maxwell, if it were not for the people there would not be any town." "Yes, and if it were not for Aunt Dorotha's home here, there would not be any people, I am

thinking, for without this haven Essex would be a blank to me." Mrs. Sutton spoke up and said, "Diana would not agree with you there, Harry, for she would think Essex complete if only the woods and fir trees remained. Diana forgets the whole world when she gets beneath the fir trees, and that is what makes her so different from the rest of us. She lives with nature next her heart." "Oh, and has Diana a real heart?" broke in Harry, gazing into the distance back of Mrs. Sutton. "I never accused Diana of having such a thing as a heart," and Harry smiled. Mrs. Sutton turned and met the eyes of her sister. "And so you are amusing yourself making fun of my heart, Harry Maxwell. Now let me tell you something, if I do say so, my heart is not all chipped up like one gentleman's heart whom I happen to know; and when you stop to think it over you will remember I do not give souvenirs to all with whom I come in contact. One fellow I know lets chips fly every way, but when I do give a souvenir it will be sound and solid, without a flaw." "Good for you, Diana," called Ora, who had been quietly listening, "I believe it, Diana." "But that is not fair, Diana; a chip would help some. At least I could manage if a chip flew in my direction."

Hettie and Carl were busily engaged in discussing the home life, since Uncle Guy's death.

Carl was telling her of the time he had in keeping things running on the place; Diana seemed to take so little interest, he said. Gaynor quietly listened; he could not understand why Carl spoke thus regarding Diana. He knew that it was not only the household but the farm affairs that Diana tended at the old home. Hettie replied, "Carl, of course Aunt Dorotha will repay you in the will for all you do for the place." "No, Hettie, I don't expect mother will ever make a will. Hettie, she is failing fast." "All the more reason that you should have her make a will, Carl. You should insist on her making it at once! You really should, Carl." "I have been thinking of it, Hettie, for some time; but, Hettie, I can't make her realize that she is failing so fast. You know I could not do that. It would pain her, and then she would realize her weakness and illness, and it might be the cause of her leaving us sooner." "Yet it should be done, Carl, you know it should, and it must be done! Leave it to me," said Hettie. "I will talk with Aunt Dorotha." Gaynor turned away with a muffled curse on Hettie to see Ray Brewer bowing profoundly to Viola as he offered her a chair. Bessie and Marie stood in the doorway whispering and laughing. As John came in at the gate they ran down to meet him. Viola turned to Aunt Dorotha, saying, "You

are not well, are you, Mrs. Varden?" "Yes, quite well," answered Aunt Dorotha in a tender voice. "My, but you are failing fast," continued Viola, heartlessly. Mrs. Sutton arose and went to her mother's side, and quietly said, "Viola, I really feel jealous of mother. She stays young so long and entertains, where it would wear me completely out to always have a house full, and here I am not nearly her age!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HOUSE PARTY AT AUNT DOROTHA'S.

"I am not denying women are foolish; they were made to match the men."

When Viola came out on the veranda, Carl's eyes followed her every movement. He thought Diana was unjust to Viola; she was a woman that it would pay Diana to copy. Diana flushed as she heard Viola's words and saw the look of pain fill her mother's eyes at the mention of her failing. Mrs. Sutton's voice was always low and sweet, but now it had a ring of defiance in it that Viola could not fail to notice. Gaynor arose and, coming to Aunt

Dorotha's side, he gazed into Viola's expressionless eyes, saying, "If all women grow old as beautifully as Aunt Dorotha, I would wish all women were old now. I don't see how she can stand to entertain such a lot of light-headed youngsters as she has around her—myself, for instance. Miss Ditson, only once in a lifetime do we find such a peaceful welcome." He kissed Aunt Dorotha's brow and went out of the vine-laden veranda into the garden below. Harry also rose and followed him. Rev. Hague drew his chair toward Diana as Harry rose. He said in a low tone, "I thought I would never get the opportunity to speak to you alone, Miss Varden." Della and Ray were chatting cheerfully. Viola had not spoken since Mrs. Sutton's words. She now rose gracefully, and went over to where Carl and Hettie were still sitting. As Viola seated herself by Carl's side Mr. Smith entered the grounds and slowly went toward Carl and his party, but his eyes rested on Diana's face as she was talking to Rev. Hague still. Hettie was just asking Viola of the friend who was to join her there. Viola gave a disgusted toss of her head as she said, "Oh, she is the daughter of very wealthy Western people. There is nothing to Iola whatever; I only entertain her on account of her people. My father and her's were partners at one time. Iola has not inher-

ited any of her father's shrewdness, though; she is hopelessly plain, and I was only too glad to have her come up here, instead of at my home, as I can hardly endure her! Her father, mother and brother are all fine society people, and it seems so queer that Iola is such a little prude. She is like Diana in one respect: she is happy when she can waste her time on flowers. I enjoy visiting their home—so consequently I have to entertain Ola when she takes it into her head to come. Her name is rather sweet, and one could imagine she was a pleasing personality." "Ola, I believe you call her," Hettie said. "Yes, Ola, we call her, but her name is Iola Vandike."

Hettie turned a deathly color and fell back; Lawyer Smith caught her; she muttered "Iola Vandike." Diana had seen Hettie as she fell and dashed across to her side; Viola and Carl jumped to their feet. Diana and Smith carried her in tenderly and placed her on the couch in the living room. Diana bathed her face and tenderly raised her head on her arm. Smith stood and watched the girl as she administered to her cousin. Mrs. Sutton entered and bent over the pale face of her cousin. Diana asked, "Where is Cousin Gaynor? Tell him to come in." Just then Gaynor appeared in the doorway; he came over and quietly asked what had happened. Smith related how

Hettie had been talking cheerfully with Carl and Viola, and of her fainting as he came on the veranda. Gaynor came to Hettie's side and gently caught her hand, and said, "Hettie, Hettie, what is the trouble." She opened her eyes and gazed into their eyes as they bent over her. She closed her eyes again and reason once more flashed back. "Yes, Viola had said that Iola Vandike was soon to arrive; she was glad that Gaynor was not near to have heard the name. She once more opened her eyes and smiled, saying Viola's perfume did it. It was very heavy, and "heliotrope, I never can stand that perfume! I am all right now, and so sorry to have bothered you all. Just go on and join the others and leave me with Mrs. Sutton." Diana and Smith returned to the veranda, and as Edna walked by his side he said ,"Miss Varden, what a blessing it is to be able to fill such places at such times. I am never much at working over ill people, caring for people's woes; women always get me muddled, especially when they faint. I have always felt that many women faint to get their husbands muddled, so they will buy them everything they want, from a hundred-dollar-hat to a little poodle dog." Diana laughed at this speech, and returned, "No doubt some women do practice that method, but not Cousin Hettie, Mr. Smith. I have

little use for a woman who leads a poodle dog after her wherever she may happen to go. There is a place for such things and a poodle dog's place is not in a woman's lap; but of course the women are foolish, you know; they were made to match the men."

Smith flushed as he said, "Miss Diana, you are a man-hater, I believe." "Oh, no, indeed I am not, yet I have very little use for a man who lets his clothes get ahead of his character. I say what if a man be poor in worldly goods, if he does his duty and his work?" "You are right, Miss Diana; too many let their minds become gauged with the dollar, instead of good, sound sense." As Diana and Smith reached the veranda they found it unoccupied but for the Rev. Hague. Viola and Carl were walking toward the lake; the others were out in the old-fashioned garden. Diana seated herself by the door, where she could see Aunt Dorotha in the parlor, where she was rocking to and fro with a happy light in her eyes as she watched the group of merrymakers below on the lawn. Diana said, turning to the Rev. Hague, "I am planning a hunting trip this week, up in the woods; that is, if you all are interested. Why, we will arrange to go for a stay right under the old firs, sure enough, as we will go up beyond the lakes into the deep woods. We will camp,

hunt, or just enjoy life in general. I know Lawyer Smith will be a valunteer, for he says he is a great hunter; so will you second the arrangements, Rev. Hague?" "Yes, indeed I will; it will be a pleasure to me to be one of your party, although we, or I, should have to return by Sunday." "Well, yes," said Diana, "we must all be back by then. Now, let us call all the others and see what they say to the trip." "Say to what, may I ask?" came from Gordon Gaynor as he stood in the door. "Why ,to be sure, Cousin Gaynor, to be sure." She explained her plans to him. He, too, seemed delighted with the idea.

Diana went to her mother and told her of the plans for the camping party. Mrs. Varden smiled tenderly on the girl, and asked if it would not be too much on her shoulders, "for you look so worried, Diana dear." "No, musz mine, I am only worried because they tell me that Mrs. Duncan is very ill and I am so sorry for Pal and his father. Ora has gone over to see if she can be of service, and I believe I will slip away while they won't miss me and see how she is now." "That is right, Diana dear; Mrs. Duncan is a very good neighbor and you run right along dear; yet don't stay too long, girlie, and neglect your guests."

Aunt Dorotha looked into the beautiful

face of the girl and said, "I am very proud of my little Diana; after all of Hettie's harsh treatment you could bring yourself to act the true lady by forgetting it all and caring for her so tenderly. It made me very happy to see that, Diana." "I am glad you were pleased, musz, but if I had acter otherwise I would have been unworthy to call you mother," and she went to the door and looked for Harry, but she saw his tall form swinging across the field that led to Pal's home, so she went out the back way with the intention of following him, but as she opened the kitchen door she saw Gaynor standing talking to Maggie. She said, "Cousin Gaynor, don't tell on me, but I am going to run away for a few moments." Gaynor came to her side and said, "May I run away with you, too?" "I am just going over to see how Mrs. Duncan is," she answered. "Pal's mother, you know they say she is dangerously ill." "Yes, and I am going with you, too. Diana, do you know what caused Hettie to faint?" "Why, no, Cousin Gaynor. She said the strong odor of the heliotrope might have done it; it is rather stifling at times, and Viola uses so much of it."

Gaynor could not believe it had been the heliotrope that had made Hettie faint, for he had never known Hettie to faint before; she

had acted so queer when he spoke of her fainting, he did not understand it. When they reached Mr. Duncan's yard they came upon Harry and Pal seated on an old woven rustic seat. Diana left Gaynor with them and went in, where she found Oro and Mrs. Duncan. Diana went to Mr. Duncan and asked him if there was anything she could do to help in some way. "Not now, Diana child," he answered; "Miss Ora looked after our dinner, and my wife's sister will be here this evening, so we will manage fine now; but, my girl, take care of Diana and cheer Pal. He is heartbroken over his mother's illness." Diana ran out into the kitchen and called Pal from the back door. He came around and Diana told him all her plans, of Viola and the fault she found, how glad she would be when she was gone. "Yes, Diana, I will be glad when you are alone again. I never see you alone any more, not since I brought you the lilies, and I'm lonely when I don't see you around. Di, I am glad you all can go on a hunt, but you will not get any game with such a crowd. By the way, Di, I like your cousin Gaynor; he is all right." "I like him, too. I must go back now, Pal, or they will begin to miss me.

Pal clasped Diana's hand as she passed the door and whispered, "You come over any-

way, Di." She nodded, and they hastened toward Aunt Dorotha's.

CHAPTER IX

"Up the world and down the world, over the world and through;
I am happy, you know, wherever I go; I paddle my own canoe."

At last they were on their way to the lake for the starting of the week in the woods. Viola had wanted to wait for Iola Vandyke so they had waited day by day until the week was gone. Still no word from Iola until Saturday; then she had written that she could not get there until the following week; so Monday morning they had wended their way to the great lake—Hettie, Carl and Viola in the lead; then John, Bessie, Marie and Ray close behind; Della, Ora, Rev. Hague, Smith, Gaynor and Harry and Diana behind with shawls, paddles and a light lunch basket. They had sent the provisions up by the guides, and so they were all ready and happy. The sun was shining and glittering over the great rolling waves. There was just wind

enough to rock the boat in a cradle fashion; it seemed it held out a welcome to the party as they came up to where the waves were washing on the shore. Ray's sister, Mrs. Medford, awaited them as they arrived at the beach. She had promised faithfully she would accompany them if she were allowed to bring her two little tots with her. Diana was delighted, as she loved the children, and she knew it would be a pleasure to the girls, at any rate, to have Mrs. Medford as one of the party, as, like Ray, she was always in the right place. Her son, about thirteen years of age, would save them many steps, as he was a manly little fellow. Fred Medford was a good shot with the rifle and Diana admired the little fellow for his prowess and steady nerve. Thelma was a fairy-like little being with fluttering golden curls that had a fashion of falling over her eyes. She had sparkling brown eyes that danced as they peeped up at one from the curls. She was ten years old and the pet of the home and of many other homes in Essex. The party was arranging the canoes for the start, when Gaynor said, "I never handled a canoe in my life, so her. You can make it, can't you, Diana?" age as good as any of us, so you get in with where do I get?" Carl said, "Diana can man-

"Why, to be sure, Cousin Gaynor, I will get you there all right."

Rev. Hague said he did not feel it would be safe for him to try to manage one alone, either, so Ora offered to see that he got there all right. She said she just loved the exercise. So it was settled that they should help to get the ones who could not paddle canoes in with the girls who could manage them.

Thelma ran over to Diana, crying, "Let me go in your canoe, Aunt Di, won't you?" "Diana, won't that make a little too much load for you?" said Mrs. Medford. "Oh, no, I am used to managing my own canoe, and I know it to perfection, and you need not become uneasy, Mrs. Medford." Diana pushed her canoe out into the great rolling blue waves, her lithe body swayed with the motion of the paddle. She exclaimed, "What can be more glorious than this, Cousin Gaynor?" "Nothing but heaven itself can be, cousin mine." Little Thelma broke out into an old song, and before long they heard a bass voice join in and Diana's favorite of all the old songs drifted across the waves, "How dear to my heart are the scenes of my childhood." They looked to see who was singing the bass and discovered that the canoe of Ora and the Rev. Hague were around by their side. Then Ora and Diana joined in the singing, and as they

paddled on the others joined in the song, until the hills and valleys sent it back in echo from hill to hill. Across the lake the old song drifted on. Carl and Viola were far ahead and Diana said, "Now, I must stop singing and catch up with that brother of mine. It seems he thinks he is the only one who can paddle. We are going to race with him. Thelma and Diana sent the canoe flying across the waves as she spoke. She passed Harry and Ora, and now she was going by Smith and Della, who were close to Carl's canoe. Harry started to follow; he kept a pace for a time, but he soon fell back again. Now she was winning on Carl's canoe, and Thelma was cheering her on. Now she and Carl were side by side. Thelma began to clap her hands joyfully as Carl's canoe began to fall behind. The canoe was dancing over the waves and fairly flew as the girl once more bent to the paddle, stronger than ever before. Now they were just a little distance ahead. Viola was screaming as the motion of the canoe made her become frightened. The canoes quivered with the swaying of the body, and to Gaynor it seemed that it was a living, breathing object. Diana's only thought was for her faithful paddle. Soon she and Thelma laughed joyfully, as they had left them all behind. Perspiration stood in beads on Diana's

One of Dianas wild friends.

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brow as she slowed down, but still she kept a good distance ahead of the others. She heard Rev. Hague and Smith cheer her as she sent her canoe flying by Carl's, and it sent the sporting blood through her veins and her limbs were tingling with the excitement, while her face grew rosy.

Gaynor never spoke as he watched the girl with the paddle; it was all new to him. The strength of this magnificent creature before him, the beauty of the day, the massiveness of the great forest, the wilderness they were now entering. They were coming to Diana's wild friends that she had so often told him about —of how many times the wild friends had taught her lessons that she had never forgotten. He would be glad to know more of the wild friends, for she herself was teaching him lessons that he could never forget. As they were swirling over the waves, he glanced at the beautiful hills, clothed in green during the the summer but now with the tints of autumn, and they were glorious in their mantles of crimson and gold as far as the eye could see, robed in the mantles of the fir trees, as they stood pointing upward with their brown crosses — solemn and silently bearing their message, as Diana said. Gaynor wished they might go on forever.

Diana was slowly leaving all the others be-

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hind; she and Thelma were in their glory. "Cousin Gaynor," said Diana, but he was lost in dreams. "Mr. Gaynor, oh, Mr. Gaynor," said Thelma," but still he did not hear. Thelma reached over and pinched his knee, while Diana laughed haertily. "I 'spect you were sleeping," said Thelma, " 'cause I had to pinch just as hard, 'fore you ever heard us talking to you." Diana said, "Cousin, I guess the spell of the firs were over you. Sometimes when up here I too become lost to the whole world. I do so wish dear old Pal could have come too, for we will miss him so much." "Pal knows everything," said Thelma; "he taught me how to like everybody and how to be like Aunt Diana. He says you love everybody, and he says I must try to love everybody too; and I guess you do love everybody, don't you?" and Thelma looked up into Diana's face. "Don't you?" she went on, peeping up through her curls. "At least, everybody loves you, I know." Diana looked lovingly at the little tot and said, "I try to love everyone, dear." "Oh, I know that Pal loves everyone," said Thelma. "Pal just knows everything."

Soon they came to the river that led to the camp. Thelma clapped her hands gleefully. "I am sorry it is going to end so sudden, as this has been a delightful trip, cousin mine,"

spoke up Gaynor, "but I know you must be tired." "Oh, but I am not so tired, just kind of cramped sitting in one position so long, for we have not moved very much—I mean my feet have not," and she laughed joyfully as she rose to run in to shore. "Well, you should be glad," said Thelma, "for the best is yet to come. I just love the birds, rabbits, squirrels, and oh, Mr. Gaynor, there are some lovely gardens just as God made them, and nobody even has to take care of them. He sends little fairies to paint them all kinds of pretty colors, and, Mr. Gaynor, don't you see the trees now? The fairies have already been at work painting them in such lovely colors." As Gaynor did not answer she said, "I 'spect you don't know very much yet, Mr. Gaynor, 'cause you have not been here long 'nough; but Aunt Diana, she can teach you. Won't you, Aunt Diana?" and the large, expressive eyes gazed into Diana's face. Diana blushed, for she felt rather hurt at little Thelma's words; but her mind was at ease when Gaynor spoke to the little girl. "Well, little bird, I don't know much yet, but I am learning; yes, learning every day, and Aunt Diana is a grand, silent teacher!"

Diana pushed the canoe in to the land and at the bank they were welcomed by the guide. The camps were one hundred feet above the

lake and nestled 'mid the fir trees. Little Thelma leaped out of the canoe and away up to the camps she turned. Diana and Gaynor slowly wended their way up the bank, and an odor of fragrant tea and coffee met their nostrils, and they knew they would not have long to wait for their dinner.

Diana went from cabin to cabin and prepared the rooms for the guests. She chose for herself and Ora a bed of fresh-picked fir boughs, and as she buried her face in their balmy fragrance Gaynor appeared at the door. "Oh, cousin, little Thelma was right—I know so little. This trip is a God-send to me," and he came over and stood by her side. Diana looked up into the face of her cousin Hettie's husband. Gaynor was a handsome man as he stood beside Diana—tall, broad-shouldered, laughing eyes, and a light in them that was also something new to Diana. As they stood there Diana realized that she was also learning something—a something that she did not realize herself before. It was this: she was all unconscious of how much she had looked to Cousin Gaynor for pleasures in the past two weeks. It seemed that he understood her. Not even Pal could understand her as he did. Nobody—no, nobody—had ever loved the very things she did but Cousin Gaynor. She felt surprise, and shame, at what she had

let cousin really mean to hear, for he meant what nobody had ever meant to her before. Little Thelma ran in towards them, exclaiming, "They are all here now. Let us go and help them get their canoes landed, for I am just starved waiting so long for my dinner when everything smells so good." Diana and Gaynor followed her toward the door. "What a dear she is," said Diana as they saw Thelma's curls flying in the breeze. "I 'spect you all will be glad now that we did beat you, for Aunt Diana has fires started in every camp, and I 'spect we jest had to get in ahead to prepare for our guests," and Thelma looked to be a very important piece of humanity.

Diana's cheeks burned brightly; she had not recovered from the shock that she received when she realized what Gaynor really meant to her. He was fast filling a place in her heart that not even the woods and flowers filled. She must in some way arrange their trips so she would not be thrown in his company so much.

When the remainder of the crowd arrived, Ray cried, "All follow me and you will get full, for I am very empty." "Yes, even to your head, brother mine," called little Mrs. Medford. They found the cabins all cheerful and cosy. Before long they heard the bell ring out for dinner, and they all moved to the

camp set aside for a dining-room. The odors that filled their nostrils proved to be very appetizing after the long pull in the canoes. They sat down to a feast, such as can only be found in one place, and that place in the Maine Woods. Trout, friend crisp and brown, with moose meat and deer meat; even Viola seemed to enjoy the brown steaks and dish of trout, along with the rough wood's fare. After they had finished their dinner, they investigated the camps and the vicinity. The sun slowly sank in the West, and the red of the sunset flamed over the waters, while the glistening waters cast the colors back. Some of the party were down at the lake by the canoes; the remainder sat on the piazza of the camp watching the sunset. Diana and Gaynor were among them. This sunset seemed to mean more to them; to Diana it was the setting of a love she had never dreamed of before, and even now she was ashamed to think of what had come into her life, unknown to herself. It must set forever to-night! Cousin Gaynor was Cousin Hettie's husband and she sinned to even think of this love.

He did not know, and he should never know! Like the sun, her love should set in golden memories, and her old lover for everyone would rise in its place. The spell of the

Thelma clapped her hands as the Camps come in Vein.

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firs was over others besides Diana, and they were only brought to life by the arrival of Marie, Bessie, John and Ray. "Well, did you ever—here they are all sitting just where we left them!" cried Marie. Diana said, "I intended to have the out-door camp-fire built, but I thought that it would be best to wait unil after we ate our suppers."

They all passed to the dining-room. Carl stood by the door, and as Diana passed he said, "Di, you are a diamond. I am very happy to-night, and nothing could have been equal to this trip. Sis!" and Carl pinched her cheeks. She rejoiced to think Carl appreciated the entertaining she was giving; she was so glad he liked it; she had tried to treat Viola right on account of Carl, and yet she wished with all her heart that he could let his affections turn to some other than Viola, but Carl's appreciation had made her very happy. After the supper was over they all turned to the piazza, and Diana said, "Now, who knows how to build a good out-door fire?" "I don't," quickly answered Ray, who nestled in a hammock with charming little Bessie. Diana knew better than this, and replied, "Well, that is all right, but now perhaps Bessie will help me, for I can tell her how for I know how."

They all laughed as Bessie rose and Ray

pulled her back again. "I believe I would be a more apt pupil," said the Rev. Hague, and he joined Diana on the steps. "Who else?" said Diana; "we must have two men to carry our back-logs." "I will come, cousin," answered Gaynor, as he rose, "but I am like the Rev. Hague—only a student." "Well, come on, Ora; we can teach them, can't we?" Ora and Gaynor walked side by side. They went to the stack of dried pines. Smith was engaged in conversation with Hettie and Viola, Carl, Della and Harry were telling of their experience the day Hettie and Carl had come upon a deer as they went to the spring and had left Viola and nearly frightened her into fainting. She had told Carl and Hettie that she could not stand to walk on the spongy moss that was in the path to the spring, and she would wait there for them. Then they had heard Viola screaming, and rushed back to find it had been only a deer. Harry was telling of the trips that he had made, and became so interested that he failed to hear Diana's request for help to start the camp fire. As he saw Ora and Gaynor rise he also followed to where they were getting the lessons in how to build an out-door camp-fire. Both Diana and Ora were laughing at the vain attempts that Gaynor and the Rev. Hague were making to build the back-walls for their

fire. Harry was an adept at building camp-fires, and with the assistance of the Rev. Hague and Gaynor they soon had a cheery fire started. Harry rolled up large logs around the fire for seats, and Diana brought shawls, cushions and blankets, and they were soon sitting by the fire. It shed its bright rays far out over the waters; the moon was just coming up from the hill opposite and cast its silvery rays as if in welcome.

They heard the low, weird whistle of the deer as it, too, had caught the smell of the camp-fire, and had seen the rays casting their light out over the great lake. The fire seemed to cast a weird spell over the group. Rev. Hague sat by Diana, with Harry opposite; then Ora and Gaynor sat on the opposite side of the fire. Ora said, as if dreaming, "Yes, this brings back many happy days in which Diana shared. Do you remember, Di?" she called to Diana across the fire, but Diana was gazing intently into the fire, and the Rev. Hague was gazing intently at her. Again Ora called to Diana, "What was it, Ora, that you were saying?" "Oh, it was the trip we took up the river with Pal; remember, Di? Oh, it was a glorious night and exciting, too, let me tell you," and Ora laughed. "I don't just know how long it took us to get where we were that night, but that week we had started

to climb Mt. Katahdin. It was just such a morning as this one has been; I don't remember how long it took us to get to our destination, but we started bright and early. We camped wherever night happened to overtake us. One night we were sitting around the fire as we are doing to-night. We were startled by crushing in the brush; it was the crashing of limbs and leaves falling. We knew only too soon that it was a moose coming on toward our camping ground. Pal had said when we made our start that we did not want to be bothered with meat of any kind on this trip, but that we could hunt after we had made the trip to the mountain, and here was game coming right into our camp. Our canoes were well laden and part of the time Diana had to cut the canoe loose that we were towing our luggage and paddle it along over the rough waters. We did not fancy having that moose so near, as we did not want the meat, and we did not, positively did not, need that moose's company. He did not seem to care about what we wanted. He came on; we could hear his large old antlers rattling against the trees, and it reminded us how they might rattle against us.

We had brought ropes along to help us in making our "lean-to," also to help us in climbing the mountain. Pal had already tied our

provisions up in a tree to protect them; but now as we heard the moose coming on, the crashing coming still nearer, Diana exclaimed, "Pal, that moose means business, and we will have to have moose meat whether we want it or not, for he knows we are here and is determined on locating our stamping ground. He means to put us out of business, Pal," went on Diana. "Well, I was as frightened as it is well for a mortal to be. Pal looked around us. I don't want to kill him for it will delay us on our trip. Still nearer the moose came to our hiding place. 'Can you climb, Ora?' he asked. 'Of course she can,' burst out Diana, and she began gathering up our shawls, blankets, and clothes and ran to a tree and threw them up in the branches. Pal talked in a muffled tone. 'Go get up in a tree quick, girls, and then we can make a bed of the fir limbs, and you can rest as well there as if you had a hammock.' 'I know,' said Diana, 'I can make it after we get up in the trees.' She started toward the lake, where stood tall, large fir trees, with great spreading branches." "Hurry, Ora, that moose means to do us up! Hear him." "You bet I do hear him Diana," Pal helped me up in the tree, and as the Moose came out in the clearing, Pal handed me the rifles and he, and Diana went up their trees, quicker than it takes me to tell it, but not before the Moose had sighted

them. He came rushing on to where we were pearched up in the trees, Diana caught the blankets, and cried, "Hold tight Ora, hold tight." Just then the tree shook as the Moose charged against it. Oh,—he was a monster. It was the first live moose I had ever seen. I was filled with dread as he pawed the ground, and rattled his great antlers against the trees, in which he sat. He was of a reddish brown color, and he had such great coarse hair, and it looked as if every bit of it was standing up on end, then he had a mane, too, that made him look higher than ever, as it, too, seemed to stand up straight. It was a coarse, black mane; his legs were bulky gray, with here and there a touch of yellow.

I had only seen dead moose before. Any one who never saw a live moose doesn't know what a moose really looks like. He was seven feet high and, as he threw up his great antlers, they touched the limbs beneath us. Fire flashed from his eyes as he cavorted and snorted at the tree trunk.

Diana laughed and throwing pieces of the limbs at him; while I was just too frightened to move.

"Pal said; I guess it means for us to roost up here for sometime because he is mad now for sure. You girls tie up the limbs back and forth

from each other's trees, and lie down and rest, and I will keep watch if our friend. "As Pal spoke, the moose dashed over to the tree in which Pal sat. His antlers beat a tune against the trunk of the tree; swayed the tree back, and forth.

Diana threw the rope to me and back and forth, we bound the fir limbs, until it was a net work and a bed instead of a hammock; then she threw a blanket across and tied the corners, and she rolled over to where I sat, too frightened to move.

I thought of falling at that monster's feet. Diana held my hand until I was safe in the bed, she had made pillows out of shawls and I lay down, I never felt as comfortable a bed, yet I feared to move, lest I fall.

Diana told Pal that he should tie himself to the tree, so if the moose should take him unaware, it would not shake him from his perch, Pal said "I am no tso much afraid of him shaking me from roost as I am afraid that he will uproot the tree."

Sure enough we could see from the rays of the fire that he had pawed the roots from the earth. Shortly I fell asleep and I do not know how long I slept when I was awakened by a scream from Diana. I looked and saw Pal trying to unloosen the ropes around him. The tree in which he sat was almost on the ane that

Diana and I sat in; it was just breaking day and I could plainly see the great monster of a moose, as he stood below us. Then three shots rang out in quick succession, and the next I knew there we were, on the ground,—mid blankets, shawls, limbs, brush, and ropes, with Pal above us tied to the tree.

He was untieing the ropes, when the moose had given the last frantic eforts to down us, and he sure succeeded. As Pal unloosened the ropes there lay the monster moose breathing his last near us, as he had given the last frantic efforts to capture his prey, the tree in which Pal sat, loosened and fell, taking with it our bed of firs, but luckily as the tree struck ours, it did not come in contact with us. Diana had forseen the end, and she raised the rifle and not one bit too soon. Pal loosened himself, and saw the moose lying there breathing its last, he said, "Well Diana you saved our lives!"

Pal pulled us out from beneath the limbs, twigs and blankets, and there we stood and gazed at our enemy.

Diana's aim had been true. Pal measured his antlers; they were five feet from tip to tip; he weighed over one thousand pounds, they afterwards told us. We were at a loss to know what to do with him, when Diana said, "I hear voices." We all ran down to the river, and saw two men in a canoe coming down the river

from the lake above where we had camped the day before, and we guessed correctly, that it was some Sportsman on their way to catch the morning train, Diana told Pal to call them and that no doubt they would take the moose off our hands. So Pal hailed them, and as they came in on shore, Pal asked them if they had much of a load? A man of about fifty years of age answered, "No load at all, I am very sorry to say: I had hope to have a moose, or deer, to take back with me.

I have been hunting three weeks and have never gotten any game at all, I am of the opinion that there is not any game in Maine after all. "You are the very man we want" said Pal and he motioned the Sportsman to where our enemy of the night before lay. The man stood agast at the monster moose, then turning to Pal said, "And you shot that with two women screaming in your ears," "No, indeed," answered Pal as we came on to where they stood, "I did not shoot it at all."

Pal related to him the experience we had with the ugly monster. The Sportsman turned to Diana and asked doubtfully, "Did you really shoot that beast?" "I certainly did," she replied. "We will make you all a present of it.

We don't want to be delayed on our trip, will you accept it?"

He turned to Diana and said; Indeed I shall

be only to glad to pay you for him." "I want nothing for him, only to get him off our hands," said Diana.

"It is worth much to me," he replied and threw one hundred dollars into Di.'s lap. So Pal helped them to get the moose in the canoe."

While Ora talked she became excited and raised her voice, and the ones sitting on the piazza at the camp came to the camp fire. Della drew closer to Carl, as Ora, told of the great monster. Little Thelma, lay her head over in her Mother's lap and was soon in dreamland, Fred drew close to Ora's feet and listened intently to the story, John, Marie, Bess and Ray lined up by Harry's side. "They were all quiet and interested as Ora kept on," The gentleman's name was Hyde,—Charles Hyde of New York, and Diana do you really believe that when I was playing at a New York theater one night, that he saw me and he knew me.

When I came out of the door at the side entrance, he was waiting for me.

Are you the young lady I met up in the Maine woods last year with a moose on your hands that your party wanted to get rid of he asked? I was so surprised to see him again, and to think that he really remembered me, that I did not answer at once. He went on,

"You will pardon me if I am mistaken, but I am Charles Hyde."

The lady in your party was a Miss Varden, then I came to my wits and I told him he was right. He seemed like an old friend. He inquired for you and Pal. Di and I found out later that he is a noted New York Lawyer. He wanted me to call and see the rug he had made out of the moose hide, and one day I did go up to his office, and there sure enough was the moose hide.

He asked me for your address Diana and I had expected he would come here this Fall and call at your home.

I wish you could meet him again. He seemed to remember distinctly just how we looked.

I say; "somebody else say something now" said Ora. "here I am doing all the talking." "I must put my tots to bed, Diana if you will tell me where we are to sleep;" said little Mrs. Medford, "I will do my talking to-morrow if you will all excuse me for to-night," and she wakened the children and prepared to return to the camp. "I say let us all adjourn for to-night," said Harry, as we all want an early start for the fishing grounds in the morning."

"I say as much" began Marie, when Ray cried, "Oh, I could sit here forever, he was close to little Bessie's side: Harry said, No doubt but you better see the preacher first."

They all rose and Diana explained where they would find the cabins. She and Ora walked side by side to their cabin, where the bed of firs waited them to make their dreams seem a reality, for since Ora had spoken of Mr. Hyde, she had also been as if in a dream.

Harry called to them as they entered their cabin, "Don't sleep late, and don't talk and keep us all awake;" soon all was quiet as Diana's guests, many for the first time dreamed under the watchful eyes of the firs.

CHAPTER X.

THE FIRS AND DIANA'S WILD FRIENDS

"There are two kind of women in the world, those that
Make you, and those that break you."

The sun rose early, and so did Diana's guests, all happy, and in the best of spirits, after a deep refreshing sleep. They were now once more in their canoes, and ready for the start up the river, to where the speckled beauties of the Paramachenee family dwells. They had their baskets packed, and were sailing over the waves, passing many of Diana's wild

friends on their way. They were gliding along between banks, lined with virgin timber, and they were ever revealing new wonders to the guests. They came up to a Blue Heron, as it stood eating its lunch on the bank, and little Thelma cried in delight, as a tiny little animal ran along the bank. As it spied the party, it swam to its home beneath the bank. They came upon a whole family of deer, as they stood knee deep in water taking their morning bath. Ducks could be seen on every turn, as they became frightened at the splashing of the paddles, they would fly up; flock after flock out of the rushes; the little snipes were following along after the canoes. Even Hettie and Viola exclaimed in wonder, and admiration, at it all.

Gaynor thought such a trip as this would cur any one with the chronic blues.

Baylor was right, a trip like this made one think more of the one's God; it inspired in them a longing to be worthy to live in the "land that the Lord giveth thee."

Diana kept her sanoe close to Harry's, and Ora's and Hettie. Rev. Hague would call to her as they passed the wood-land creatures to know what they were.

She and Ora, would explain what they knew about the homes and ways of the little wild

friends. Even Hettie seemed delighted.

Little Thelma clapped her hands in glee; the little child was becoming a great pet with Hettie, it would be a hard, cruel person indeed who would not appreciate the child.

Mrs. Gaynor, called "Thelma, wouldn't you like to have a great big house up here?

"I'd live with you, Mrs. Gaynor" said Thelma.

The others all laughed at the little tot she was so much in earnest. Hettie said, "Perhaps you would like to come and live with me anyway, in a great large house, and you could have pretty dolls and other toys instead of the wild friends. Would you like that, puss?" "Oh, I spect I would like that pretty well. But if you had a little girl, would Mr. Gaynor have to be its papa? Thelma had felt rather in awe of the broad shouldered man who sat in Diana's canoe, and silently gazed into her face, as they went on every canoe trip.

Thelma gazed timidly into Gaynor's face as she spoke, her words struck a chord in both Hettie and Gaynor's heart that caused a sting of pain. Hettie did not answer promptly, she was to much stunned at the little tots words; simple though they seemed to the others, they sank deep in Hettie's heart. "I tell you Mrs. Gaynor," Thelma went on, "I will come and

live with you and we will have such fun in that great large house, but we will leave Mr. Gaynor here with Aunt Diana, a cause she likes him, and he likes her, and besides we don't want no men around our house, do we Mrs. Gaynor?"

Harry burst into a jolly ringing laugh and said, "Oh! you will change your mind when you get a little older Thelma." Diana's face flushed to crimson and she turned away her head to hide the flush from Gaynor's eyes.

Hetty for the first time began to study wyh Gaynor, seemed so changed of late. He seemed almost happy, as he sat in the canoe day by day, then she caught the glimpse of the flushed face of her Cousin Diana, and a pang of jealously ran through her frame. Yes she could see it all now; he was enraptured over Diana's weird wild face, and ways.

Gaynor looked at the tiny face before him, and wished with all his heart that her plans might be fulfilled; he smiled at her as he saw the flash of anger overspread Hettie's face.

Then he said, "Now little Miss Thelma, why is it that you don't like me? I love little girls too, and if you will come and live with Mrs. Gaynor and myself; we will get you some real lettle wild rabbits, and some little birds. All kind of pets you can have. Shall I ask your

Mamma if she won't spare you to us for a little while to us? No, I guess after all I best stay here with Aunt Diana and her friends. We can ask Pal to build us a big house up here and we will jes live on and forever, and then Pal likes all Aunt Diana's friends, just as good as I do." "Ho, ho," said Harry, "I thought you did not want any men around your nice large house." "Well we don't want men" said Thelma, "but Pal is not a man,—he is a boy and he is different too," and she glanced at Gaynor.

Pal loves everbody just like Aunt Diana does, and he is good, and he talks to me, and I just love dear old Pal!

"Can Diana swim, asked Hettie?" "I really can't say," answered Harry, but I expect she can as she seems to know all out door sports to perfection." "It seems that you have lost your heart to my fair Cousin, Mr. Maxwell," and Hettie gave a disgusted toss of the head. "WELL-Er-well-Mrs. Gaynor stammered Harry, "I do admire Miss Diana, very much,—and the fact is this; I lost my heart many years ago and I am not in a fair way to lose it, for Diana has held it ever since we were children, we have always been warm friends, but Diana did not exchange hearts at all, I offered her mine and she refused it, but she still holds it.

I admire her more than any woman I ever knew, except just one other, and that is Aunt Dorotha; Diana is like her, very much like her, There are two kinds of women in the world; those that make you, and those that break you, and Diana is the kind that makes us mere men, better and stronger, and worth the life that God gave us." "Diana had better not wait too long in choosing, said Hettie, "she is not so young now." Harry's frank, open avowal of love for Diana, made her furious she could never stand to hear anybody speak favorably of Diana, and although she did not have any love for Gaynor, she hated to have him near her since the discovery she had made of Diana's tell-tale blush,—and she knew he had become more jovial of late and a happy smile hovered over his countenance, a boyish light shown in his eyes as he threw the fish line far out in the water, she noticed his face flush with pleasure. She felt a deep bitter sting of hatred for Diana enter her heart.

It seemed every way she turned fate was against her. She had intended to make Gaynor jealous of herself and Carl.

Yes she had intended to make him suffer on this trip, and cause him to turn to her for comfort. She had failed; she could never even win the old respect back now; she hated everything, and everybody!

While they had been talking, Ora and Thelma had gone down to the canoes. Very soon Thelma came back and said, there was a strange canoe there and two men.

Ora said for Diana to come quick she wanted her. Diana arose and ran lightly down the path, and saw a well known Guide and a stranger. Ora was laughing and talking to the stranger. As Diana came towards them, the stranger took off his hat and said, "Once more I meet Miss Diana,—rightly named! No doubt you could have forgotten the Gentleman you presented with a large moose in the Maine woods? I have not forgotten you Miss Varden." In an instant, Diana clasped his outstretched hand, "I am glad to welcome you once more to the Maine woods Mr. Hyde, I wish you far better success than you had before. "Ora seemed elated and very happy. She and Mr. Hyde spoke of many things in New York, and of Ora's return, and then he turned to Diana and said, "I called to see Mr. Duncan also on my way up here, and he tells me his mother is very ill, I also called to see you too, Miss Varden."

"Won't you come up and lunch with us? asked Diana. I thank you. We ate an early dinner and came right on up the river.

We want to reach the upper camp before

sundown, so I must not tarry now. I will stop in Essex for a few days on my return, and I trust I may see both you and Miss Maxwell."

"I would be glad for you to stop with us on your return, as we have quite a house party with us" answered Diana. "We intend to enjoy hunting some in the coming weeks." "Many thanks, perhaps I will accept if the invitation holds good until my return." He bowed a farewell to both ladies as he again entered the canoe. What a picture he thought as he looked back at Ora and Diana.

Sunlight and midnight,—and both at their best. Maine has grand women, certainly, and he could not tell which one he admired the most,—the gold or the raven head.

"How queer Ora;" spoke Diana, "it was only yesterday you was speaking of him, and here he is!" "Yes Di. I will be truthful,—I am corresponding with him, and he said he would be in camp this fall. I knew he would be here. But I did not want your Cousin's to know that.

Altho, I knew very little about him, I do know he is a perfect Gentleman, and a Batchelor, before Diana could reply the others joined them. Diana told Carl of Mr. Hyde's call, and Carl said, "Why didn't you insist on his joining us? "The more the merrier"

"Well I never thought of that, but I asked him to join us at home on his return," "Fine man," spoke up Harry, "I met him last winter in New York. I was there for a week with Ora.

He is a man of importance, I should say." "I am sorry he could not have remained with us," answered Carl, as he helped Viola to her seat in the canoe. "Say," began Ray, "what about changeing around some? I think Harry, you and Mrs. Gaynor might make room in your canoe for Fred, as Mrs. Gaynor says she can't fish and three lines don't work well." "Oh, I don't care particularly to fish," answered Diana, Fred could come with me." "No, now Miss Di. you promised me first and I'm coming with you." "Yes, Miss Thelma," broke in Hettie," I am coming with you and Diana too." "That is goody," exclaimed Thelma, "let Mr. Gaynor go in Harry's canoe," "why yes, answered Diana, "they can fish and we can just ride around if Cousin Hettie would like it" "Yes indeed I would." answered Hettie. Diana was delighted to find her cousin in such a pleasant frame of mind.

Soon they were back up the brook where they cast lines, and the great square tailed trout pulled viciously at the strong silken lines, Rev. Hague became interested in the fishing.

It was only when Carl, mentioned the fact, that they had best start for camp that he looked for Diana, and Hettie. They were fairly flying over the water and little Thelma was clapping her hands and laughing as a tiny spotted deer raced by the bank. Soon Diana joined them.

Hettie had enjoyed the ride also, but still she had a bitter feeling for Diana. She envied Diana her youth, strength and gentle disposition; Diana was happy as she paddled with Thelma and her Cousin Hettie. She went wherever Hettie suggested, as she wanted to give Hettie pleasure, too. Although she knew Hettie had no love for her, little did she think how bitter were her thoughts toward her, even as she laughed and talked. She tryed to amuse Hettie and to talk of what she was interested in. All the deeper did her hatred sink as she saw the beauty of the girl's character unfold. Carl turned his canoe toward the river and the others quickly drew in their lines and followed his example, as the sun was slowly sinking in the beautiful West. It was quite a pull to camp if they reached there before dark. As Diana came up to the party, Carl asked her if she could manage the rapids alone. "Why, I think so, Carl, if Cousin Hettie can trust her-

self with me, I feel sure I can, with only a slight sprinkling, or sprays, getting in our canoe." "Better let me carry you over the rapids," called out Harry to Mrs. Gaynor. "Mr. Gaynor understands a canoe quite well now, and only a slight sway to one side in the rapids would be fatal to your party." "Oh, no, indeed," answered Hettie, "you were all praising Diana's canoemanship to me this morning, and I feel safe with her as a guide." Harry did not feel safe, as he had noticed Mrs. Gaynor's careless movements in the canoe; and, too, they were imposing on Diana's strength, as she had paddled steadily all the afternoon, he knew she must be tired. He intended to follow close after her canoe any way, so he ran ahead of Smith, John and Ray, and was soon close to Diana's canoe. Ora and Rev. Hague were ahead of Diana and close to Carl. As they neared the rapids Carl stopped and said: "One at a time over this, and you all be careful." At that he swung his canoe into the angry, swirling waters, and his strong arms barely escaped the rocks on each side as he bent to the paddle. Ora and Rev. Hague came next, and they both used the paddles, and they kept safe above the rough waters and rocks. Diana came next. She had seated Thelma at her feet, and she re-

served all the strength she had left to face the angry waves. As they entered the wild laughing waters, and she reached the rocky path, the spray dashed around them. They then saw Hettie rise, and sway to one side, and then the spray and swirling waters hid them from view. Harry saw Hettie as she started to rise and he knew what the outcome would be. Gaynor sat with his back to the rapids, and only realized what was happening when he saw Smith dart into the swirling waves. As they passed over the wild, rushing waters, Harry said: "Fred, you take this paddle and just keep her afloat." With that Harry was out in the waters, and fighting his way back to the rapids. John and Ray came on and they caught the canoe with Della in it, and then Gaynor turned and beheld a sight that turned his blood cold: Hettie, with Thelma on the canoe which was upside down; Hettie was clinging to its side, but where was Diana? O God, now he understood it all. It had been only a few minutes, but as he realized it all, it seemed ages. He threw off his hat and coat, and sprang out into the water. Smith had reached Hettie, and soon had her with Thelma in the canoe. Ahead of Gaynor there was but one goal. He had seen Diana rise and fall, then rise and fall again. She was coming

nearer him. One thing was certain; she was not raising a hand to help herself. All who watched the rapids could see that, and Harry thought she could swim. Only one chance was left, only one, thought Harry—she will rise but one more time! "O God, give me the strength," he cried. Harry swam as never before. Soon he realized some one was coming behind him, then he saw Diana rise, and he made one more stroke, and just as she once more was sinking he reached her side and caught her arm, and then another caught her and lifted her above the water. Blood was covering her face and falling fast. Carl and Ray pulled their canoes close to the swimmers, and Ray gently lifted Diana in his canoe. "Carl," said Gaynor, "you and Harry get in here." Harry said, "No, I will follow Ray's canoe down until I come to my own. We must get Diana to camp." Fred saw them coming and ran his canoe back to meet Harry. They tenderly lifted Diana into Harry's canoe. Bessie had been mopping her brow, and there was an ugly cut on one temple running back beneath the dark masses of hair, where a jaggled rock had crushed its way through the flesh. Diana had never opened her eyes. Harry put his ear near her heart, and could hear a muffled beat-

ing. Ray took off his coat and made a pillow for her head, then with the blankets they made a warm, cosy bed in the canoe for her. They turned her comfortably over and wrapped her in the blankets. Carl had followed Harry and Ray to the bank. He jumped out of his canoe and knelt by her side, and as he felt the faint beating of her heart, he said that she must be taken to the camp at once. "Poor little Sis," he murmured, as he rose. Harry answered: "I can get her there as quickly as it is possible to do so, but I wanted to be sure she was not ———," and he jumped into his canoe. Fred stayed with Bessie and Ray. Gaynor had sat as if he were stunned. Viola brought him to himself as she said: "Mrs. Gaynor must have liked a cold bath far better than I would, for she deliberately stood up in Diana's canoe when they were going over the rapids. I suppose she became frightened and did not realize the danger. It was well for her that she could swim. "Gaynor never answered, but he thought that Hettie had simply carried out a well-thought-of plan. He could hardly believe his own mind. Was it possible she could do such a thing? As Carl entered the canoe, he said: "I am afraid this is a bad thing for Diana. She has an ugly wound, and if it had not been for you and Harry, I fear she would never have

reached the camp again." Carl's back was turned to the rapids and he had just passed over when Viola said: "They are over in the water. Look, Carl; look!" He had not seen Hettie as she rose. Ora had turned to watch Diana make the rapids, and as she saw Hettie rise, she said: "Oh, look at that woman; she will upset Diana's canoe." Then it was all over.

Rev. Hague said: "What can this mean, Miss Ora? Mrs. Gaynor must have became frightened." "Frightened nothing!" broke in Ora, "she did that on purpose. She hates Diana." "Hates Diana!" said Rev. Hague. "Oh, Miss Ora, surely you are mistaken! Mrs. Gaynor did not understand the rapids, and was frightened." The Rev. Hague was puzzled.

Marie said: "We might have known Hettie had some meanness planned up when she insisted on going with her. She hates Aunt Di." "Hates Miss Diana? Why, surely Marie you are mistaken," said Mrs. Medford. "Why, what would she hate Diana for?" "Jealousy, I expect, because everybody else loves her. She has never treated Aunt Di decently since she arrived. For my part I wish they had stayed in Boston."

"I don't care," went on Marie, "I don't like her, and I expect she has drowned Aunt Diana."

John took little Thelma in his canoe and wrapped her in blankets. Hettie and Smith arranged to get in with Della. "Where are the blankets?" asked Smith, of John. "You see Mrs. Gaynor is cold and may need more blankets! She must be wrapped up until we reach camp." "Yes, I am cold now," said Hettie. "I'll get Diana's blankets," said Smith. "No, don't touch those blankets," said John, in a rough, hoarse voice; "she may need the blankets herself." Smith looked up at John's set white face, and for the first time he turned to from Smith's lips. His face, too, became pale.

"Oh, couldn't Diana swim," said Hettie in a mocking voice. "I thought that Diana could do most everything," and Hettie gave a little laugh.

"Of course she can swim," said Smith. She is an expert swimmer; she must have struck a rock. We must run over and see," and he seated himself in the canoe and took up the paddle.

Hettie said, "I am nearly frozen; can't we go on to camp?"

"Not until I know how Diana is," said Smith, and he pulled the canoe to where Harry and Ray had landed. Before he could reach them, he saw Harry send the canoe flying down the river, and he turned to Carl: "If I had known, Carl, that Diana was injured, I would have gone to her as-

sistance at first, but I thought little Thelma, and Mrs. Gaynor were more in need of help, as I knew of Diana's strength as a swimmer."

"Yes," burst from Hettie's lips, "you should all have gone to help Diana, and stumbled over each other to be the first one to aid her." John pulled up beside the other canoes just then, as little Thelma answered Hettie's remark.

"I guess, Mrs. Gaynor, when you caught me, your foot struck Aunt Diana, for when you caught me, I saw her fall back and her head must have hit a rock awfully hard, 'cause I heard a noise as your foot struck her, and I expect that was why she did not swim any more. I was not a tiny bit afraid, 'cause I jes' love to swim and Aunt Diana had hold of me when we first went over. She was helping me right under my arm when your foot struck her, and then she let me go. I swam all alone until Mrs. Gaynor caught me. Poor Aunt Diana! I wonder if she is much hurt?"

Ora whirled her canoe away at Thelma's words and went down river in hot pursuit of Harry's canoe. His canoe fairly flew over the waves. Rev. Hague helped with all the strength of his body; he was shocked at it all. Again Diana's face came before him—he bent to the paddle as never before. Ora had said, "Pull fast, Rev.

Hague. Diana will need care at once," Soon they had left the others far behind. Mrs. Gaynor sat and shivered as they arranged for the parties to ge tall the canoe partners straightened out. John came up beside the others with four in his canoe.

Hettie said, "Why didn't Miss Maxwell take some of your load?"

"I expect she would have taken Thelma had she thought," said Mrs. Medford, "but they are half way to camp now, as they followed Harry and Diana."

"They should remember there are others who got a soaking," said Hettie.

"None of us are apt to forget it," said John, sarcastically. He turned his canoe over to where Ray was.

Mrs. Medford said, "If some one will loan me a paddle, I can take Diana's canoe back to camp, and also lighten John's load."

Carl took one of the paddles from his canoe and they were all on their way to camp once more. It was a much sadder crowd, and all through Hettie's jealousy.

CHAPTER XI.

HARRY MAXWELL SAVES DIANA FROM THE WAVES.

"Love's tenderest, truest secret lingers ever in the depths untold." As Harry left the others far behind, he lay down the paddle and moved over to the side of the girl. Once again he bathed her brow, and called her name. She shuddered, and muttered: "Don't Hettie. Oh, don't! You kicked my head! Oh, oh," and she settled back in the warm blankets again. Harry then took up the paddle and pulled as he had never pulled before, for here lay the girl that he would glady have given his life for. He loved her; yes, he loved her, although she cared nothing for him, he would always love her. Harry had learned through Ora why Hettie had treated Diana with such contempt. He had noticed Gaynor's set face with the eyes filled with love and fear, as he helped to raise Diana out of the waves. He did not blame Gaynor for not loving that wife of his, but he should not impose on Diana. Soon he reached the camp. His arms were tired and stiff, as he had not paused for one moment. The sun was slowly sinking and left the shadows across the

waves, as Harry pulled his canoe into the bank. He then tenderly knelt by the side of the girl. She was now breathing heavily. He clasped her in his arms and carried her up the bank, and called to the guide to open up her cabin. Then he carried her in as the guide hastened out for wood to start a fire in her cabin, as the evening had began to get damp. Harry felt her warm breath against his cheeks, and her bosom rise and fall as she struggled for the breath that was now fanning his face in quick, short pants. As he reached her cot he bent his head and kissed her cheeks, lips, and brow; she would never know, and oh, God, surely he deserved it, for the true love he had borne her all these years. He then put her gently down, and knelt by her side, and bathed her face and brow, calling her name tenderly. After some time she moved and her eyelids quivered and then she opened her eyes and gazed around her. Her eyes rested on Harry's face and she smiled and said in a shaky voice:

"I could have made it all right but Hettie became frightened."

"Yes, I know all about that," said Harry, "just you rest now."

"But, Harry, where are they, Hettie and Thelma?"

"They are all safe," said Harry, "and will all be here soon."

At that instant, Rev. Hague and Ora stood in the doorway. Ora ran to Diana's side.

"How is she?" said the Rev. Hague in a low voice?

"She is conscious now," said Harry.

"What a fright I gave you all," said Diana as she glanced up. "Poor Hettie, and little Thelma, I wonder if they are wrapped warm and cared for. You see after them Ora, like a good girl."

Ora promised to make ready for the returning guests, but first she had to get Diana's wet clothes off. She had a cherry, blazing fire started, and soon Diana's wound was dressed, and she was wrapped in Ora's pink kimona. The silken folds fell around her and enhanced her appearance and beauty, as she lay on the fir couch. Her dark hair fell in a wavy mass as Ora had partly dryed it and left it falling over her shoulders. Ora stood in admiration as she again entered Diana's cabin. She had always thought Diana beautiful. Ora stood and gazed at her patient.

"What are you standing there for, Ora?" questioned Diana.

"I was simply wondering if you were not an angel after all. I never knew you were as lovely as you are to-night."

Diana laughed and said, "Many thanks, Ora mine. If it had not been for Cousin Gaynor, and

that brother of yours, I would have belonged to another planet by now, but if I had gone with the feeling around my heart that was there when Cousin Hettie tipped my canoe, I fear it would not have been in the shape of an angel that I would have appeared to you again," said Diana laughing weakly.

"Never fear, Diana mine, we all saw her actions."

"Ora, do you think she really meant to upset the canoe, or was she frightened?"

"I think she did just what she intended to do," answered Ora. "But what can be the trouble with her? She doesn't treat Mr. Gaynor half decent, and why is it that she hates you, Diana? It is not on his acount, for I can remember when she was here before she treated you the same way."

"I am sure that I try to treat her right," answered Diana. "I feel hurt that Hettie feels that way toward me."

"She hates you because you are so easy with her, Diana. She envys you your good nature; she ought to have me to deal with."

"Ora, do you know, I am going to let Hettie understand that she must not meddle with me hereafter. At least, I will let her know that I know she kicked me!"

"Yes, Diana, and I, too, will let Hettie Gaynor know that there was more than one that knew her motive in tipping the canoe," said Ora.

"Do not let us spoil our trip, Ora dear, we will not worry over it any more."

As Ora passed out, she met Carl and Harry and Rev. Hague, and she told them to go in and keep Diana company, but not to let her worry or talk any herself.

Carl said, "Diana, do you want to go home to-night?"

"Why, no, Carl; I am just tired. Let me rest awhile and then I shall be all right. I am going to hunt before we go back home."

Carl laughed and said, "Here's hoping you're all right, Diana, but if by morning you're not all right, we better return to Essex and see a doctor."

Gaynor had turned and walked away with the Rev. Hague, as he saw the others crowding in Diana's cabin. Hettie had entered the cabin with Viola and began to change her garments. Mrs. Medford took Thelma in hand and soon had her changed into dry clothes and her curls were tossing in the breeze, as she dashed toward Diana's cabin. She entered as Ora and Diana were both quietly resting on the cot. She ran to Diana and put her rosy cheeks close to Diana's pale ones, and kissed her tenderly.

"I'm awfully sorry you got hurt, Aunt Di, and I jes wish that Pal had been along. He would always take care of us, wouldn't he?"

"He would, indeed he would, dear, and I have wished for dear old Pal all the way, but I will be all well to-morrow and then we will forget the old rapids, won't we?"

Thelma cuddled close to Diana's side and the curls of gold mingled with the raven tresses. Thelma said in an undertone, "Aunt Di, I jes believe Mrs. Gaynor upset our canoe on purpose. Didn't she?"

"No, no, dear, answered Diana, "she was so frightened, and she did not know what she was doing. You must not say that again, dear."

"Alright, I won't," answered Thelma, "but I bet if Pal had come, he would not let you work all the time like you do."

Somehow it seemed she needed Pal more than ever before on this trip. She thought of Gaynor. He had never even come to see if she were dead or living. Well, he, too, needed dry clothes, and no doubt Hettie kept him busy waiting on her. She did not miss Hettie if she never came, or Viola either, for that matter, but just as her thoughts turned to Mrs. Medford that lady entered the door, and exclaimed:

"Here is that naughty little tot of mine in here worrying you!"

"No, not worrying me," said Diana, "she is my nurse."

Mrs. Medford cried out, "Diana, you charming girl; what masses of hair." And she came close and gazed into the girl's dark eyes. "Diana, you look sweeter than I ever saw you in my life before, with all this hair falling about you. I am so glad you are better now, and by morning I hope you will be well enough for a pleasant day in camp, if you're not able to get out, it looks very much like rain, and I think many of your guests would prefer a cosy corner on a rainy day to canoeing," and Mrs. Medford laughed heartily. As she was talking, she was putting cushions up behind Diana.

She heard the bell for supper, and she heard them enter the dining room. She gazed into the fire and once more she saw the spray dash over them, as she sank beneath the canoe. She shuddered as she thought what it might have been but for Harry and Cousin Gaynor, then her thoughts drifted to Pal. She wondered how his mother was; Mr. Hyde had said she was very low. Poor old Pal, how she did wish he were near to save her from herself. She then wondered why Cousin Gaynor had never been in to ask for her; he had helped to save her and yet he never even came to the door; she did

not own even to herself that she expected him to come. She knew she wanted him to come, and yet she was afraid of herself, if he should come to her alone. She sat and dreamed, with her gaze fastened on the coals. The shadows played about the room, the fire cast ruddy flames, and the dancing lights played over Diana, as she sat with the silken folds falling about her shapely form, and the hair falling over the shoulders in glossy waves.

Gaynor had told Ora he would go stay with Diana while Ora ate her supper, and he had stood by the window as one enraptured, as Diana sat dreaming by the fire. Gaynor could stand no more—he entered and came close to Diana before she knew that he was there.

"Well, little cousin mine, how are you feeling after your cold bath?" and he stooped and kissed her brow. Diana raised her tear-filled eyes to his face and he looked and read what was written there. She raised her hand to her head as if she were dazed, then she fell forward. Gaynor knelt by her and clasped her to his breast; he lifted the sweet face up and saw that she had fainted; he crushed her to him for just one moment, then he placed her tenderly back on the cushions, and began to bathe her hands, her face and brow. He gently raised her head and poured water through

the set cold lips. As he lay her back he thought that his great love for her must never be unfolded, out of respect for this girl, even she must never know. What was it he read in the depth of the dark fathomless eyes? Oh, God, could it be possible that he was to pain another by his already hapless life. No; she must never know how much he wanted her. But oh, just to hear her say she loved him, to know it. She had looked it in the depth of the beautiful eyes. He read it but he could not speak. He was tied by bounds that were stronger than iron. To think she loved him—that meant eternity to him. If only he could tell her. No! he must forget. Diana opened her eyes and saw Gaynor bending over her; she closed her eyes again, as Ora came rushing in.

"Poor dear," said Ora, "she must not try to raise up again until her head has rested. You must be quiet now," and Diana clasped Ora's hand and held her tight. "Ora don't go out, will you, dear?"

"No, I am here to stay and keep you quiet."

Gaynor passed out into the darkness.

CHAPTER XII.

DREAMING ON FOREVER BY THE GREAT CAMP FIRE

"Who hath smelled wood-smoke at twilight?"

The sun was shining brightly in through the cracks of the door when Diana heard Thelma calling her name. She leaped out of bed and opened the door to Thelma. Ora slowly opened her eyes, and Diana cried, "Oh, Ora, do you know it is after ten o'clock, and whatever shall we do? We have overslept!"

"Oh, Diana," cried Thelma, "do you know that early this morning some of the boys went out hunting and they killed the biggest old Moose, and it is out here hanging up in the yard! Do just come and see it," and Thelma ran out banging the door behind her. After coming in from camp, Harry wrote a note and hung it on Diana's door: "Carl, Gaynor, Fred, and I are going out hunting, and if we are not back for breakfast do not wait on us—Harry." He knew that no doubt the girls would sleep late, and to save them from any remarks from Hettie's sharp tongue he did this. He knew Diana needed the rest, and he felt sure some of the party would find it. Ray and John had planned secretly to go up the river early in the morning before the others were up,

and take dainty Marie, and Bessie and get that promised deer for Bessie. Marie ran down to Diana's cabin to get her rifle, and she found Harry's note. She read it, and then wrote on the other side: "We have gone up river to try and get a deer. Will wait for your crowd at the old landing. Marie, Bessie, John and Ray."

Later on Smith arose and hearing no sound, he walked over by Diana's cabin, as she was always the first one up. He saw the note hanging on the door, and he read it, and then walked away. "Well, well," he muttered, "if I could get Della and Mrs. Medford out I would follow them. Here it is ten o'clock already. Perhaps Diana is not as well this morning. I'll run around to Mrs. Medford's cabin." As he started, he once more turned back, and read the letter over again. "It seems queer that Carl did not tell me, but no doubt he thought the Rev. Hague would also want to go, and one would not get very much game with such a crowd." Just then he met the Rev. Hague and he said, "I believe, Rev. Hague, that Diana is not as well this morning, and that Ora no doubt was kept awake last night and therefore they have both overslept. Now, let me tell you what we will do, we will eat our breakfast, and take the rest of the party out for a while and let Diana rest."

Smith went and told Mrs. Medford the plans; while Rev. Hague told Hettie and Viola. Breakfast was waiting on them.

"I suppose that Diana has gone with them," said Hettie.

"Oh, no, Mrs. Gaynor, Miss Varden is not as well this morning, and she has not risen yet," he repeated it as Smith had given it to him. As they were all gathered in the dining room, little Thelma came rushing in with eyes big and excited. She exclaimed, "Mamma, oh mamma, come quick! dere is something jes drefful out here." They all followed the little tot, and beheld the Moose that Gaynor had shot the night before. Smith rushed to where it was hanging, exclaiming, "Gee, but that is a peach."

"A beauty, truly," said the Rev. Hague, as he joined him.

"I wonder who shot it," asked Smith?

"Gaynor," came from behind them, and turning they met Harry. He explained how Gaynor had shot him, and he said, "they had such good luck without going far, so they came back and went to bed, and he surmised that the others were still asleep, and he would go rouse them out and with that Harry went flying back to the cabins where he told the fellows what he had told the party. Hettie and Viola had walked toward

Diana's cabin, and met Thelma with the note that Harry had written to Diana, and after reading that Hettie was at ease. They returned to the dining room and met Harry at the door. He inquired where Diana was. "She has not wakened yet," Viola, and she repeated what the Rev. Hague had told them. "Ora was up with Diana nearly all night. I suppose her head must have bothered ner."

"No doubt," answered Harry. "Well, it is just as well to go up river on the morrow, and let Diana rest to-day." Harry went to Diana's cabin, where he found the girls just finishing dressing.

"Whatever shall we do?" asked Diana, as she emerged from the cabin.

"Do, why do nothing," then Harry told her of his letter, and all his stories. "The only trouble will be that Marie and her party will be up there waiting on us, but I know how we can even manage that. Let some of the folks go up the river for a canoe ride, and tell the girls we won't go hunting until to-morrow. The party can make it a canoe ride and a hunt combined. You got it down?" laughed Harry.

"Well, I can truthfully say that my head is hurting," said Diana, "and I am glad that we won't have to go up to-day." They started to go

to the dining room and met Thelma coming with the note.

She said, "Mamma said she spect this belonged to you, Aunt Di."

"So it does," said Diana, and she and Ora laughed as they read of how Harry had made it all smooth for them. They found the party eating as they entered the dining room. The Rev. Hague turned to Diana as she took a seat by him. "I am heartily sorry, Miss Diana, that you are not as well, but when you see the handsome Moose that Mr. Gaynor brought in this morning, it will drive away the pains."

"I have seen him, and I must say that Gaynor is a fine marksman. The Moose is a fine specimen, but no beauty in my eyes, as I can never see any beauty in a Moose. They remind me always of the one I treed.

Ora hung her head as she noticed how Diana got out of telling a falsehood. Gaynor smiled as he glanced at Carl, but he sat is usual cold and silent, then he thought of Harry and how thoughtful he had been of Ora and Diana. They all felt amused as the cook inquired what time they wanted their dinner? It was then noontime, Diana answered quietly: "Make it five o'clock." When they were all seated on the piazza, Carl asked of Diana, "Well, Sis, what is up for the

day? Marie left a note saying that she and the others would wait for us up at the old landing, and now that we must postpone our trip until the morrow, I say, let some of the party that love to canoe ride, go up and tell them that we have decided not to go up until to-morrow. Then you all can just hunt, fish, or whatever you choose. I don't want to go out to-day myself, but I know you all can find a-plenty to enjoy life. Fine day for a canoe ride, too."

"A fine idea," answered Smith, "and I for one will like the trip."

"I believe I will go to," said Carl, "even if I don't go all the way."

"May I accompany you, Carl," asked Hettie.

"To be sure," he answered, but he hoped to go with Viola alone for once. Harry noticed the look in Carl's eyes and said:

"Now, Mrs. Gaynor, I wanted you and Mrs. Medford to come with me?"

"Of course we will," chimed in little Mrs. Medford. "Fred and Thelma will stay with Diana," she went on, as she noticed the wistful look in Thelma's eyes."

"Mr. Gaynor will come with the Rev. Hague and I," said Ora, as she saw the look of pain cross Diana's brow.

"Now that will be just fine," said Mrs. Med-

ford, and Diana can just rest until our return. Gaynor did not want to go, but he could not refuse. Harry ran back and whispered to Diana, "I will take the others away up river, but see that Ora soon returns to keep you company." Thelma and Diana turned and entered the cabin where Fred lay still sleeping. Diana shook him gently and said, "Fred, do you want to take a walk with Thelma and I?"

"Sure I do." Fred was soon dressed and they entered an old trail. Diana said, "Now be real careful and no doubt you will come up to some deer," and sure enough as they moved along they ran up to a fine deer. When the deer jumped out it was a fine buck. Thelma and Fred drew closer to Diana. As the deer dashed down, Diana cried to Fred, "Shoot quick, Fred," and at that Fred raised the rifle and fired, and they all dashed down the trail, and there lay Fred's first deer. Diana said, "Now, Fred you run back to camp and get the guide, and Thelma and I will wait for you." Fred fairly flew back up the trail. The guide quickly came to their assistance, and Fred was simply wild over his success.

"No sense in going hunting up the river," he told the cook, "just look at what I shot, and all by myself, too. I did not need any help, did I, Aunt Diana?"

Diana laughed as Fred threw back his shoulders.

"I jes guess if Aunt Diana had not been there that you would have run away from it," burst out Thelma.

"Oh, taint so now Thelma, I just up with my rifle and fired."

Diana soon left the children playing around the game, and she entered her cabin and was soon fast asleep. Her head did pain and ache most awfully. Closing the eyes helped some, and she intended to rest a few moments. She was not aware that she had been asleep until Ora burst in the door with "Oh, such luck as we did have. You know the others got ahead of me, and Harry had told me to come back. I ran my canoe in back of the Island like Pal used to do, and there we came upon seven of the finest deer. Rev. Hague had a chance to take his pick, and he shot the finest large buck. He and Mr. Gaynor have gone back after it now. If they all have as good luck, why, we can spend another day fishing."

"I believe they would all like that," said Diana. Come over here and rest, Ora. This fir couch just draws us to dreamland. Ora tell me more about Mr. Hyde; is he something more than just a friend? I have thought I would ask you so

many times, and would forget it until we were with the others, and then I could not ask. Now that we are alone, tell me true."

"I don't know, Di dear, just what to tell you." Ora threw herself beside Diana on the fir couch. "He has never asked me could he be more than a friend, but he was so kind to me when I was in New York, and he is coming to Maine this fall while I am here and I have invited him to spend some time at my home, and he has accepted. He is a well known business man and he owns mines of some kind in the West, so he told me. He tells me sometimes of his work in New York, and Diana, although he is much older than I he fills a place in my affections that no other ever filled. You will respect him when you know him better, Diana. He will draw you to love him for he is a man with brains, and good, sound sense."

"I will be glad to meet him again if he means all that to my chum," said Diana, and then they both fell to dreaming, and it was not until they heard the voices of Bessie and Marie laughing gaily that they arose to see the girls, with Ray, John, Gaynor and the Rev. Hague looking in the door.

"Smart folks, you are," said Marie, here we have come back with our two deer, and find you all sleeping."

"Really, did you get anything?" inquired Diana in a doubtful voice.

"Get anything," cried Ray, "follow me," he started out and the others all followed him. Sure enough there hung two more deer besides Fred's.

"Whew," cried Diana, "where did this one come from?" and she went over beside a large deer with beautiful antlers.

"That one is mine, Miss Diana," said the Rev. Hague. "Miss Maxwell took us right in where there were seven beauties, and I was admiring them and let nearly all get away before I thought of my rifle. This one was then making for the bank when I fired."

"We are as hungry as bears," said Marie. "Here it is five o'clock and no chance to eat for an hour yet."

"Why, it is five o'clock," said Diana, and I told the cook to have dinner ready by five. Where are the others?"

"All out there but Smith and Della. They ran around the Island and won't be here for some time."

The supper bell rang out.

After the supper was over, they built a roaring fire in the yard, and it cast a cheery blaze, and light of the richest scarlet far out over the waves. The wood-smoke scented the air, causing the

party to draw near the rest around the great fire.

Viola said, "There is nothing so sweet, and grand as this wood-smoke at twilight."

Ora, Mrs. Medford and the children were curled up on the blankets, Indian fashion. Rev. Hague and Hettie were quietly talking. Harry and Gaynor sat side by side, and they were both gazing into the fire and dreaming of the same thing—Diana—and what she meant to each one of them. Ray looked up as it grew darker and exclaimed, "I would not stay up that river with my supper if I had never seen a deer, and yet Smith seems to be happy if he never sees but one dear."

I prefer being here by this glorious fire and dreaming on and on forever. Say, Diana, it has been a mystery to me all along, how you can be like you are, a girl that knows how to weave the spell over us all, as you do, and yet remain single. You cause us to want to be worth loving, and yet you don't have the sign of sentiment about your life. I mean you never open up that heart of yours to the one individual, like the rest of us do."

Many eyes were turned toward Diana as Ray so openly asked the question they had all often wondered over. Diana sat cuddling little Thelma to her, and she never took her eyes from the fire,

As Ray ended his bantering, she turned her eyes full on him, and answered, "So there is but one individual to whom you open up that heart of yours, Ray," then she paused and gazed into the fire for some moments. As Ray waited her answer she said, "Well, Ray, I expect the reason that I don't seek the one individual is this, I can keep on dreaming forever and nobody can spoil my dreams, but if I opened my heart to the one individual, it would prevent me from dreaming on and on forever, as you just said. My dreams are all so beautiful that I would hate to come back to reality, and to what could never be."

"Well, Diana, I would never dream such a dream! I like to dream of what I want to happen, and then some day my dreams are realized!"

"I know, Ora, I dream of that, too. Oh, what I would give to have my dreams realized, but it would be impossible, I know. One dream is this, yet I know it can never be"—every eye was on Diana now—"I like to think of my mother getting well and strong, and in the years to come, to always be here to comfort and help me, as she now does, but I know that can never be. I can dream of the future with her, and yet you know, and I know, that this dream can never be, and other things similar to that, and like Ray says, I shall just dream on and on forever."

"Miss Diana," said the Rev. Hague, "your dream regarding your mother may be realized to a certain extent. Your mother may be, with you always, if not on earth, in the blessed promise we are told that she will be with you in the whole of eternity, if you keep the good faith, and in all the future years, you may be comforted by the presence of the mother you love. What a blessing it is that our dreams can be realized—if not here, then in the hereafter.

"Oh, I am getting gloomy, let's not talk about all those dreamy things now," said Marie.

"But Miss Marie these are not gloomy things—it is the reality of all dreams."

"I say," spoke up Carl, "let's have some more music to-night."

"All right, that's the idea," answered John, and Fred was sent to the cabins for the instruments.

Diana sang. Rev. Hague and Hettie drew nearer the fire. Hettie's thoughts flew back to the time years ago when she had stood on the pier and dreamed of things that never came true. She saw Vandyke as he walked out toward her. She wondered if it were not better had she dreamed on forever as Diana was planning to do. No, no! those hours were the best part of her life; she loved then, and trusted, too, and now,

now well she was glad she had not dreamed on. Diana would learn that reality was best, yet a something kept ringing in her head. It seemed to say, if you had only dreamed on, your life would now have been free from pain and sorrow. She hated Vandyke with as great a hate as she had loved him in the past; she did not want to think of the future, and of her dreams coming true, and she turned to the group about the fire, and said:

"I wish if Diana can't sing something worth while, you would all stop, and just talk."

"Why, Mrs. Gaynor, I thought that was beautiful," said the Rev. Hague. "Oh, if our dreams were only to be realized," and he gazed into Diana's face as she sat before the fire.

"Well," answered Hettie, "when you young folks are old married people like Mrs. Medford and myself, you will begin to realize that love doesn't last but a year or two at its best."

"Oh-ho!" laughed Ray, "well if it lasts as well as sister's and Medford's love has, I won't worry about it fading."

They all burst into merry laughter. Diana rose telling them to come into the camp and she would have them a lunch prepared.

As she passed the cabin where Harry and Gaynor roomed, she saw a man sitting before

the flickering fire; his strong form shook with sobs. Diana paused by the window and gazed in; Gaynor sat with head bowed on his breast, and the tears were streaming over his face. Diana had missed him from the fire as she rose to accompany Smith and Della to the cabins. She never thought but what he had returned ere this, she stood like a statue by the window and she longed to go and ask him the cause of his tears, but she dare not trust herself to do that. One thing was certain: he was not happy. What was the trouble with him and Hettie? "Oh, God, to think that Hettie was tramping under foot what she would gladly have given her life for, the love of Gordon Gaynor. If Diana had only known, she was the one, and the only one, who had ever held a place in the love of this man. Gaynor did not know what love really meant until he met Diana. As Gaynor rose, Diana turned from the window and dashed back to the camp fire. She met the others all coming in, she kept on toward the fire. When alone by the fire, she knelt and prayed that the Christ might help her to be true to her womanhood, and show her the right way. Tears fell over her own cheeks as she returned to the cabins. Harry was waiting for her at the walk; he went over to her cabin with her.

"To-morrow we hunt, fish, and sport in general; is that it?"

"Yes, Harry, I thought it would be best to start early, and let each one plan where they want to go, and then all meet at noontime for another dinner out, what do you think of it?"

"I think that would be the best plan, for Smith wants to get a bear, and Carl and Viola will want to fish. I say just let them all follow their inclinations to-morrow."

"You know it is our last day in camp, too," said Diana, "as Iola Vandyke will be there when we return, or shortly, and of course Viola must be there. Harry, I love this life, it draws us all nearer the great Father."

"Yes, Diana; it is true. And I, too, love camping, and I have enjoyed this trip more than you know," and Harry thought of the time he held Diana to his heart. He longed to clasp her in him arms again, but no, he had promised and he would be true. Harry bid Diana good night and slowly went to the cabin. After Harry entered the cabin, Diana saw a man come around the cabin and walk toward the camp fire; the man was Gaynor. She watched him as he sat down and gazed into the fire, and then she saw a woman creep stealthily out and down the path that Gaynor had gone, and she also stood and watched

Gaynor. As he rose, the woman hid in the brush and after he had entered the cabin she came out from the bushes and followed him to the cabins; the woman was Hettie. Diana stood as if rooted to the spot. She was shocked at the performance of Cousin Hettie, and she entered her cabin and for the first time she locked the door and barred it before she went to her bed, where Ora was sleeping. Diana lay awake for hours, dreaming of the one man that Ray had said she did not know. How little they knew! Well, it was one blessing she could dream on forever and without any injury to any one, and dreams were sweet.

CHAPTER XIII.

UNDER THE SPELL OF THE FIRS, AND WHAT GAYNOR MEANT TO DIANA

"Love many, trust few,
But always paddle your own canoe."

The party were nearly to the rapids when Carl pulled up by Diana's canoe and said:

"Are you sure Diana that this won't be too much for you?"

"Oh, no," answered Diana; "Cousin Gaynor

can paddle quite well now, and I am not the least might afraid of not making it. Are you, Thelma?"

"Of course not," answered Thelma. "Mr. Gaynor is not a tiny might afraid, are you, Mr. Gaynor?"

"No, I think not," said Gaynor, smiling at the little tot. He turned to Diana, saying:

"Won't it be too much for you, Cousin?"

Diana's only answer was a cheery ringing laugh. They had all been up bright and early for the start, with baskets, fishing rods and rifles, and they were well on their way when the sun came peeping up from behind the distant hills.

It was a fine morning, Smith had started early in hopes of seeing a deer, and the rest were following up the river. As they made the rapids, Diana went over them easily and safe, and she turned to watch the others when a shot rang out. Then as quickly another, and another.

"Oh!" cried Diana, "I expect that is Smith and he has gotten his deer! We must hurry on and help him."

She and Harry ran side by side, until they came around an Island, and there, sure enough, was Smith. He and Della were out of the canoe and on land. As he caught sight of them he cried:

"I got him, I got him."

As they drew nearer, there was another monster moose lying near Smith's and Della's feet. It had even, beautiful antlers, but it was not nearly so large as the one Gaynor had shot. The party landed their canoes and the boys helped Smith to get his moose hung up, so if any one happened along they would not molest him.

Harry placed a tag on him and said:

"Lawyer Smith shot me, hang a lawyer."

They all were amused at the tag, but Smith said:

"It takes a lawyer or a congressman to get one of those fellows."

They then moved up to the upper rapids; the men carried the canoes over and the women and children walked up the river bank. It was all new to Viola, Della and Hettie—this life in the woods—and they felt amazed at the beauty and peace around them.

Fred followed the tracks of the wild friends of the woods, as now and then a rabbit or squirrel darted up the path ahead of them and scattered leaves, and they went rustling after them. Diana was happy as she and Ora darted after the children, over old logs and brush, until they came to the rapids.

"I don't blame Carl, nor anybody else, for hav-

ing the shivers, when they come near the rapids," burst out the Rev. Hague, as he stood and watched the angry, rushing, roaring waters, as they dashed over the rocks. Rev. Hague shuddered as he turned away.

"You prefer to carry over then?" laughed Ora.

The others came, and for a few moments they stood and watched the leaping, falling spray as it rose and fell over the rocks.

"Oh, I think this is simply grand," cried Diana. "Look at the spray as it sparkles in the sun. Truly it would make a wonderful picture!"

"I was just thinking of that," said Della, who loved all things beautiful.

Once more they were in the canoes, and on their way to a fishing ground. The fish were hungry.

Mrs. Medford said as noon drew near that she would help Diana prepare the lunch. Gaynor went to the bank and called the others. It was a cosy little nook they had found, where some other party had tented or camped. There were tables built out by the fire, and cosy little seats scattered through the woods near by.

"Diana, why is it the firs seem to reach all the hearts but yours?" Smith asked.

"I am not so sure but that they do," she said; "but see, I must wait until all my guests are

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served first, then I will know where I am to come in," and she looked mischievously at Ora across the way, and went on. "You see Ora has not fallen under the spell of the firs yet," then her eyes rested on Gaynor's face, and she drifted away into dreams.

'Diana is a mystery," thought Smith. Viola and Carl were looking out into the lake when Hettie said:

"Cousin Carl, it seems to me it is time for you to settle down to married life. When is it to be?"

Viola blushed, and Carl looked lovingly at her, and then he said to Hettie:

"We will let you into our secret, Hettie; but we had planned to let mother know first. Any way, it is only a matter of time until they all know. Viola and I are to be married next year. Viola wanted a few changes made at the old home before our wedding, and we won't be married for another."

"And Carl is to make arrangements to let Aunt Dorotha give the managing of the home into my hands then, and we both think it would be better for Diana to get out into the world more," said Viola and then she may meet some one who will make a stir in her cold heart. Diana knows plenty of young men who would make her a good home, but she doesn't seem to care

for an yof them in that light not even her old friend Pal," said Carl. "It seems her heart is all wrapped up in the old home and mother, and I do not get very far in the door of her heart myself," and Carl laughed a little sad laugh.

"Well, I would not let Diana interfere in my plans," said Hettie in a harsh voice. "If I were you, Carl, I would simply tell Aunt Dorotha that she had to make a will, as she is growing very feeble, and that Viola was coming in to run the home and that you wanted things made straight, so you would know what you were going to get for all your labor. I feel sure that Aunt Dorotha will see that you deserve the home and she will make a will at once. She could arrange for Mrs. Sutton, and Diana for Viola can't be bothered with Diana in her home, and Diana should not expect it of you, Carl."

Viola smiled at Hettie as she went on. This had been just what Viola had wanted to say, but she stood in awe of the cold, silent man at times, for Viola had seen his set look when things did not go to please him, and she did not care to mention the things that Hettie was now inclosing to Carl.

"Diana shall never interfere in my home, Hettie," said Carl, and his lips were drawn in the old set way.

"But she can, Carl, and she will, too, unless you have the will made so that she can't."

Gaynor sat talking to Ora when he heard Hettie talking of Diana. He listened to their plans; his face at first flushed, then turned pale and set. Surely Carl could not, would not, be so selfish as to turn Diana out of the old home that she loved, and that Viola hated for its old-fashioned comfort. What would that home be without Diana's care, and what would Diana's life mean away from the old home she had loved from childhood? It would be like striking a blow into that tender heart. Of all things, to let Viola have the care of the mother that she loved. No, oh, no; Diana would never do that. Perhaps she would then build a home, up here with the wild true friends as she had said, and she and Aunt Dorotha would live here, and dream on and on forever. No, Diana could not have that dear old Mother with her long. Why, oh, why could not Carl see and save Diana from Viola, until Aunt Dorotha was laid at rest. That would be hard enough on Diana, without the loss of the old home also. He wondered if what he read that night in Diana's eyes were really meant for him. Was it possible that this girl whom other men worshiped, could care for a wrecked life like his? Yes, 1 · had seen love written there;

he had never seen it there before, and he had never seen it there since. Now she was the same light-hearted girl that she had always been when in his company. He had seen her eyes rest tenderly on his face when she had sung, "Love me and the world is mine." He had seen the love in the eyes, but it was only for a moment. There was a something that he could not understand in this girl. Oh, if he could only shield her from the threatening sorrow, and here was Hettie urging it on. What a curse he must have laid on his shoulders—to be tied to such a woman! Ora, too, had sat and listened to Hettie's plans, and she decided to tell Diana. Surely Aunt Dorotha would never take the old home out of Diana's care, and yet she was becoming very childish in her old age, more so than Ora realized. Marie and Bessie made a dash for the canoes calling:

"Come on, the time's up."

They all started for the bank. As they reached the canoes, Carl said:

"I guess that we best start back toward the lake, as we will have to carry over the rapids again."

So they all headed their canoes down the river and fished on the way. Before they reached the rapids, Diana said to Thelma:

"I want you to go with Ora, far away, dear; you won't mind, will you?"

"Oh, no," said Thelma. "I'll go with Ora if she will let me. She is like you, Aunt Di, and I like her."

Diana ran over by Ora and the Rev. Hague, and said:

"Ora, would you mind letting Thelma ride with you? I am feeling as if I needed a change, and I knew you would not mind for a while."

Ora reached out her hand to little Thelma, who leaped lightly into the canoe; the others were far ahead now. Ora wondered what Diana could have meant by the move.

Diana saw Gaynor's questioning eye on her, and she said:

"Cousin Gaynor, I am going to make the rapids. Do you want to get in with Harry?"

"Diana, you must not try that, you shall not risk your life in that way."

She smiled a cold set smile, and said:

"Cousin Gaynor, I am going to make the rapids. I won't lose my life there. But if you are afraid, I don't want you to come with me. But I intend—I am going to make the rapids."

Gaynor saw the beautiful eyes grow dark with a fierce passion, and he knew she would do what she said she would.

"I am not afraid to go with you, Diana, even to the end," she pushed her canoe ahead of them all. Harry saw that little Thelma was missing, but Diana did not give any of them time to question her moves. She shot past the bend, and was far ahead of them all now. As they neared the rapids, she burst into a low, weird laugh, and exclaimed:

"I am so happy Cousin Gaynor. "I am not afraid of anything, now," then they heard the voices of carl, Smith, and John in warning tones, but her canoe was into the midst of the spray and foam, and her lithe body bent to the paddle as she steered straight through the rapids. When the canoe tipped and quivered, she laughed.

Soon they came out on the quiet waters again, and Diana turned to Gaynor and said:

"Now, Cousin Gaynor, they all must see that I could have made the lower rapids. I love my canoe and I am sure I can manage it, and I felt hurt at their remarks regarding my canoemanship. I have always paddled my own canoe, and I always shall, and I want them all to know that I have the courage and strength to do it."

Again she gave the low, weird laugh; her dark hair was tossing in the breeze, her cheeks were flushed to crimson; her eyes were dark and sparkling, her bosom rose and fell, with every

breath. She let the canoe drift slowly on, as she gazed back at the foam and rushing water.

"Pal will be proud of me, now," she said. "He taught me how to manage in the rapids. Before I had always felt timid, but to-day—— Cousin Gaynor, you do believe now that I am capable of managing the canoe, don't you?"

"Diana, I will believe you capable of handling after this. I never felt such a sensation as when we came through that spray and foam; it seemed wonderful to me. Diana you are wonderful."

Diana glanced over and saw John and Fred on the bank, and she pulled in to where they stood.

"You don't know what you all missed by not making the rapids," called Diana.

John laughed as he replied:

"We came on ahead to pull you all out."

"No need of that, John," said Diana. "Pal taught me how to come over the rapids and the lessons were not forgotten."

The others had gathered around; a second glance told Diana there was an extra canoe coming, when she saw Ora and Mr. Hyde coming, walking side by side. Ora called to Diana:

"If I had known what you were up to, I would never have taken Thelma in my canoe."

"Oh, Ora, it was grand; and Cousin Gaynor will say as much."

"I think he will, Miss Varden," said Mr. Hyde, coming near them.

"I did not manage the canoe. I don't know anything about the thing, and Miss Varden has the full honor."

"Imppossible," cried Mr. Hyde, and he, too, fell enraptured at the girl's beauty. He now stood up in the canoe and saw the girl's breath come in short, quick gasps. Diana would not own that the trip had been too much for her, even to herself. As Harry appeared he cried:

"Diana Varden, you are all tired out, and I don't wonder at it, for not one man in our whole party dared attempt the rapids to-day as they are exceptionally rough."

"There is no harm in a failure if we only rise again after falling. I know now that I can manage my own canoe. I think some of the party doubted it for a time."

"They need never doubt it again," said Mr. Hyde. Diana pushed out once more into the water and the others followed.

She turned and called to Mr. Hyde, "You are going to join us at the camp to-night, aren't you?"

"I shall be pleased to. Your Brother requested me to stay," said Mr. Hyde. "I shall enjoy being at camp with you all."

"Yes, and it is our last night there," said Diana. Gaynor tried to aid the girl as she once more bent to the paddle; he could see that her strength had been over done. Little Thelma had jumped in Diana's canoe as they started and now Diana said to her, "Are you ready for another swim, dear. We are coming to the lower rapids?"

"I guess Mr. Gaynor won't move like Mrs. Gaynor did," said the little tot looking up at Gaynor through her curls.

"Well, little Miss, you are changing your mind about me—I thought you did not like me?" said Gaynor playfully.

"Oh—but I do now, 'cause you love Aunt Diana, and Mrs. Gaynor don't, and I don't like her so well since she treated Aunt Diana so badly." Diana flushed, and she gave a quick glance at Gaynor. He was gazing at her; she then turned to Thelma.

"Thelma, dear, you must not speak like that. Mrs. Gaynor did not treat me badly."

"But I know, Aunt Diana, that she did, for when your head was hurting you so that night, Mrs. Gaynor said that you were not hurt so much as you wanted folks to think you were —you just wanted Harry to pet you."

Hettie watched Diana as her canoe headed for

the rapids, and she did not think that, at the last moment, she would go into the swirling waves. She did not believe Diana would dare to take the chance; she realized it was for her benefit that she had undertaken the feat. Now, the others would know that there was a reason for her not making the lower rapids. Hettie's face flushed with anger. Hyde and his Guide had come up just as they saw the canoes tossing about in the rushing water.

Hyde said, "I thought they said the rapids were impossible to run—in a canoe?"

"They are supposed to be," said Carl, and he quickly followed John into the bank and rushed around the falls, to see Diana safely gliding along. John knew that Diana had a good reason or she would never have undertaken the feat, and he admired her grit, but he had great fear of her never making the rapids. Smith ran down to Diana's canoe and held out his hand.

"Let me congratulate you, Diana, for you have the right stuff in your make-up to paddle your way through the world as well as through the rapids."

"I agree with you there," said Hyde," as he took his hat off to Diana.

"They say, 'In the voyage of life we must not

drift, but steer,' and we must all admit that Miss Varden is an expert at that."

"I thank you all for the praise," answered Diana, with her eyes on Hettie, "and we have heard them say also that 'A smooth sea never made a skillful mariner.' I was in rough waters the other day, and I did not have as good luck, but it was the best after all, for I want to be a successful mariner, and I tried again, but not with a female. That was the cause of the rough waters the other day. She became frightened, and I got this as a souvenir," and Diana pushed back the dark ringlets that hung over her brow. There were the ugly red scars, and swollen temple.

"Hush, Thelma, hush," cried Diana sharply.

"I don't care; I jes' don't like her no more, and I do like Mr. Gaynor 'cause his eyes laugh all the time when he looks at you, Aunt Diana, and you do love Aunt Di, don't you?" asked the little girl as she gazed up into Gaynor's face. Diana felt her heart flutter, and her face paled as Thelma rattled on.

"Yes I love Aunt Diana—everybody loves her, and we won't let them harm her even by a word after this, will we, Thelma? Here we are where you and Aunt Diana took your bath," he said as they came to the rapids.

They went over light and easy, and John was following close behind. He cried, "Diana, you are a wonder to-day. I don't see where you get the strength from, for I am tired myself!"

"I get it from the firs, John, but I am rather tired, and will be glad when we get to land for to-night."

Hyde and Ora ran their canoe up beside them now, and Hyde said, "They tell me your party has been very successful in hunting. I have not had very much luck myself. I hope to take back a deer at least. I would love to get a panther, or a bear."

"I don't think you are very apt to come upon a panther, but you might easily find a bear. You don't want to stay too long hunting," said Diana, "for we want you to stay a while with our party at Essex. They will soon be returning to their homes, and we must make the best of their vacations. I would like very much to be with you all for your home entertainments."

"Here is where we stop," said Diana, as she pulled her canoe in and jumped lightly on land.

"Let me pull the canoe up," said Gaynor. Diana turned to Ora and Mr. Hyde and said, "Let us go up to the camp."

As they followed on, Diana told Ora to go to her cabin, and she would go and hurry up the supper, and see that the fires are started in the cabins, and she turned and entered the kitchen where the cook was busy with the supper.

"Another extra piece of beefsteak," said Ora, "as Mr. Hyde and his guide will be here for to-night. We all leave in the morning, and I presume you won't be sorry."

"Indeed I shall," answered the cook, "we always look forward to your expeditions as there is life around the old diggings then."

He looked after Diana as she ran out and muttered, "There is an old-fashioned girl—she is not afraid of soiling her hands in honest labor—God bless her."

Diana flew from cabin to cabin. Gaynor stood and watched her; he could not understand this creature, she was now as blithe and gay as if she were just beginning the day and he was tired and he knew she must be. She came on toward him, laughing and singing. As she saw him, she paused and said, "Do you know Cousin Gaynor that this should be called 'Love's Paradise' here, for there are Marie and John, Bessie and Ray, Della and Smith, Carl and Viola, and now Ora and Mr. Hyde, all

coming under the spell of the fir trees. What do you think of it?" and she laughed a merry, ringing laugh.

" 'Tis the spell of the firs, is it?" said Gaynor. "I have been thinking of what a charming little matchmaker my Cousin Diana was becoming. Now what about Mr. Maxwell and the Rev. Hague, where do they come in?"

"Oh, Cousin Gaynor, they are like myself, waiting and dreaming, and I expect envying the others their happiness."

"Cousin Diana are you envious of the others' happiness?"

"No, oh, no, Cousin Gaynor. But—if the one man of my dreams were here and he asked me, what Della said, that Smith asked her to go on through life with him and if I were free to go and he were free to take me, why I would do just like the others are all doing and we would come here each year and stay with the fir trees. In our dreams we would be happy—it would be happiness all along the way. But Cousin Gaynor, I don't envy any of them, for not one of them are as happy as I, with my dreams when I picture the days to come—with the One Man of my dreams, and so I shall just continue to dream on and on forever."

Gaynor tried to read the girl's eyes as she talked, but they were turned toward the lake and lost in shadow.

"Cousin Diana, what is the one man like in your dreams?"

"He is good, strong, merciful, patient, peaceful,pure, loyal and loving, and, above all, he must know, understand and mean what he professes before God, to love, honor and cherish, in sickness and in health, and he must remember most of all, 'That those whom God hath joined together, let no man put assunder.' He must be all that, for to-day, Cousin Gaynor, when I read of the homes wrecked by divorce, it makes me shudder. The One Man of my dreams must realize—that we can not fool with the laws of God, and be happy. I am afraid the one man will never come my way and yet I can dream on forever of what might have been!"

"Gaynor did not answer for some moments, but followed her eyes toward the lake, where the rest of the party were rounding the bend. Then he turned to Diana and said, "There are more ways than one to wreck a home and a life! Do you think divorce wrong when the wife and husband have lost love, yes, even respect, for each other? Do you think it bet-

ter to live on together when the husband and wife have lost love, trust and even hope has gone out of their lives. When living means only a slow tedious dying—when bitter words are all that passes between them. Is not such a life more of a mockery to God, than the divorce courts would be?" Gaynor spoke bitterly, and as Diana listened to him, she let her heart go out to him in pity and love for this man; she now knew that he spoke from the heart. What would she do if she were in Gaynor's place? But she thought—he should have known before he made the vows before his God. Yes, he was to blame for that.

"Oh, Cousin Gaynor, if love were true, the wife and husband would not drift apart. There are only divorces when love is not taken into consideration, and the man or woman who marry without love are to blame for the wreck, and they should suffer. I tell you, Cousin Gaynor, love is everything. It makes or mars a life time. I would rather live and dream on forever—than to see the love of mine harm another life—to let the love I have for the one man cast a shadow over another life. I am so happy in dreamland, so please don't make me think of things that never ought to be, and spoil all I have to dream of."

Carl and Smith held up their string of fish, to Mrs. Medfad.

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"What do you mean, Diana?" and Gaynor came nearer.

"Diana, what do you mean?"

"I don't know myself," answered Diana, as she realized just what she had said and what it meant?

"Come, Cousin, let us go into Ora and Mr. Hyde."

"Not until you tell me what you mean," and he caught her hands. "What do you know about love, Diana? I thought you were heart free and yet you speak as if somebody has found the key?"

"I am going, Cousin Gaynor," and Diana pulled her hands away and dashed up the path, calling back, "Come on, Cousin." When Diana reached the cabin where Ora and Mr. Hyde were, she paused by the door, as her heart was beating wildly. What had she said to Cousin Gaynor anyway? If she had to live a lifetime with Hettie, she would feel that life was a mockery, as he had said and yet would she seek a divorce if she were in his place. She was not sure but she felt that he would be justified in so doing. She had felt for some time that there was no love between them. What she could not understand was why a man of his stamp married her. He must have

loved her, for she was sure he was not a man who would make light of God's ways. When he spoke so bitterly, she did feel pity for him. She noticed the way Hettie treated her husband—always with a sneer and a harsh word. What a life his must be, year after year, with her. No she did not blame Gaynor, and yet she could not help but wonder why. Had he ruined his life? He knew what vows meant and how was it that he had not found Hettie out until too late. Gaynor of late had been the man of Diana's dreams, although she would not admit it even to herself, yet when he was talking it flashed through her mind if he seeks the divorce courts, he would be free. Before she realized what she was saying, she had given him an inkling into her mind, and her heart and of what was already there. She had told him to not make her think of what ought never to be, but in an instant she realized what she was thinking, and saying. No, indeed he would not be free even then, for those whom God has joined together, let no man put asunder. Could it be possible that God had joined those two together. It must be! Diana hated herself for her own thoughts. When she entered the cabin where Ora and Hyde were sitting, Ora cried out, "Diana, child, how white you are?"

"Just a tiny bit tired," said Diana. "We were just speaking of your friend, Mr. Duncan. He is a fine young man and I admire him very much. He has the making of a grand man in him. I am anxious to become better acquainted with him. It is a long time that a boy has struck my fancy like this fellow. He is only a boy compared to myself," and Mr. Hyde looked at Ora.

At the mention of Pal, Diana forgot everything else; she had missed poor old Pal all along. The supper bell rang out, and, as they entered the dining-room, they found the others all gathered around the table and chatting gaily. After supper, they all gathered around the campfire and, as usual, it found the lovers all side by side. To-night Ora and Mr. Hyde joined the clique. Diana sat at Harry's feet on a blanket and the Rev. Hague sat near her with Mrs. Medford and the children. Viola called out, "What about the music tonight?"

"Sure enough," said Diana, "this is the night for Ray to sing his solo," and she rose and started after the instruments.

"I believe Rev. Hague promised to help us out on the songs," said Diana.

"I will later," said the Rev. Hague quietly. Ray sang with an even baritone voice—the

old song, "In the evening by the moonlight." Harry, Rev. Hague, Ora and Diana joined in the chorus; in the last part Mrs. Medford and Mr. Hyde joined in also. It was restful and dreamy; as the voices died away, all was silent ,then Della asked Diana to sing "Silver Threads Among the Gold."

"You remember the last time we camped here, Pal helped you sing that and I have not forgotten how beautiful it was."

"Pal is not here to help me to-night," answered Diana.

"No, but I am," spoke up Harry, laughing, "come on."

They sang the old song beautifully. She began to sing in a sweet, low voice, as she thought what the words really meant, she put her whole heart into them; Harry's voice quivered and he droped out and coughed, but also wiped a tear from his eyes. Mr. Hyde leaned forward and gazed into Diana's face as she sang; what a magnificent creature this girl was; the words reached his heart, and he turned to the golden-haired girl by his side. Ora was looking at Diana and tears fell over her cheeks. She never thought Diana could sing like that; she made the old song have a meaning as well as music. Ray clasped Bes-

sie's hand. John whispered to Marie, "always dear, when you are old as well as young." Marie turned to him with tear-dimmed eyes. Carl gazed at Diana; he could not understand this girl. Hettie sat staring straight before her in the darkness. Gaynor bent his head over the harp and a low moan escaped his lips, that Harry's sharp ears caught; he gazed in pity at this broad-shouldered man. As Diana sang the last chorus, Rev. Hague said, "All join in." Mrs. Medford sang, too, as if every word was meant. Ray, John, Bessie, Rev. Hague and Ora sang. Mr. Hyde thought he had never heard anything so beautiful, even in the gilded theaters of New York. It did not come from the heart as it did when Diana sang. He was glad he had come down to spend the night; it was worth millions to him, this trip. As Diana finished, little Thelma sat up and rubbed her sleepy eyes. I 'spect I was dreaming. I thought I heard Daddy singing, but I guess it is 'cause you all were singing the song he always sings."

Gaynor thought anyone could easily see that Mrs. Medford was singing the song truthfully and that it was the life she lived; the little child's words proved that.

"Now, Rev. Hague, it is your turn, as it is

getting late and this is our last night," sighed Diana.

"You all help me," answered Rev. Hague as he began, "God be with you till we meet again." They all helped him on the last verse, and as it died away Diana said, "Let this be our prayer. Rev. Hague quietly said, "Let us pray." It was a picture seldom seen, as they knelt to thank the great Father for his watchful care and guidance. The fire cast a ruddy glow over all.

Rev. Hague and Harry bade Diana good-night and went to their cabins. Harry found that Gaynor was not there and he walked on down towards the lake. The moon was just rising, and shed its bright rays across the water; it was a beautiful night. Harry was soon in a canoe rocking back and forth enjoying the balmy breeze, when Gaynor walked down the path.

"Well, Mr. Maxwell, I see you, too, are enjoying the moonlight."

"Yes," said Harry; "come on, Mr. Gaynor, let's take a spin over the waves." Gaynor stepped into the canoe and he and Harry rattled on gaily. Harry asked Mr. Gaynor about his political work; they were soon far out in the lake when they saw a white canoe dart

hither and thither over the waves. Harry said, "I believe that is Diana's canoe. I will run up and see what this means."

They saw the canoe had but one occupant; now it was drifting slowly on to camp. Surely it could not be Diana; they heard a low mournful sob, and they followed close behind—the canoe pulled into land and they kept back as they saw Diana step from the canoe and pull it up on the bank. She ran lightly up to the campfire and threw herself down beside the fire. Gaynor and Harry came on up the path and they saw a woman dart away, and they wondered why Diana had run like that, but they were also more surprised, when they came up to the fire to find Diana gazing into the fire with the tears streaming over her cheeks.

"Diana, dear," burst from Harry's lips, as he saw nothing but Diana's tears—he forgot even that Gaynor stood near. Diana jumped up exclaiming, "Whatever are you two doing out here this time of night?"

"We would ask you that question, Diana?" said Gaynor.

"Well, as Ora and Mr. Hyde were talking, I decided I would come out here and say goodbye to our last night of camping and happi-

ness, and I guess I was taking the parting to heart." She wiped her eyes and smiled up at them through her tears.

"Come, we must go in, for the fire is nearly gone," and she rose and started up the path toward the cabin. Gaynor and Harry followed, but neither one of them were satisfied with her explanation. Harry was wondering who the other woman could be that went up the path as they were nearing the fire, but Gaynor saw, and he knew it was Hettie. In his heart, he thanked God that Diana was safe, but Diana puzzled him, too. What was she doing out in that canoe alone? Why was she sobbing so bitterly; this girl was becoming more and more of a mystery to him! When they reached the cabins, Diana bid them good night, and ran in her cabin. Diana found Ora sleeping soundly, and she went to the dresser and began to take her glossy hair down, when she heard somebody call her name lightly. There was a faint tap on the door, and she went and opened the door and Carl stood there. He said in a low voice, "Diana, you and Ora, come out here quietly if you want to see something worth while."

Carl and Mr. Hyde had sat talking, after they went to their cabin, and then they walked out

on the piazza, where they could see the string of game as it hung from the great beam. They saw something moving; they stood still and listened and then they saw it was a big black bear, and he was trying to reach the game that was hanging above him. Ora and Diana stole over the piazza in their bare feet and found the others all gathered there in their night gowns and kimonas, and Mrs. Medford and Harry were coming with the children. They all stood and watched the bear, as he would go up the bank, and then turn and stand up on his hind legs and with its fore-paws held up, it would make a rush at the game as it hung above him. They watched him until he had one deer almost down, then Carl said to Mr. Hyde, "Now you saw him first and he is yours, if you can get him." Mr. Hyde took good aim and fired. Viola screamed, and Hettie ran, but when the smoke had cleared away, the bear was gone.

"I don't deserve any game after this," said Hyde, "missing him that near."

"But I know you did not miss him," said Diana. "I was looking over your shoulder, and you had a good aim on him."

"That is right," said Smith, "you must have got him, for I, too, noticed that you had a

good bead on him. Get a light and we will soon find out."

They lighted the "Jack" and found the bear breathing his last only a few paces away. Mr. Hyde was delighted. He hurried back to each cabin and said, "I did get him after all." They dressed the bear and hung him along with the other game, and then all was at rest under the firs. Diana could not seem to sleep. She thought of how Harry and Cousin Gaynor had found her with the tears falling over her face; she felt ashamed of it all now. She was very unhappy to-night, she could not tell why; she did wish Pal had come along. She would be glad to hear his strong, manly voice once more. It always was filled with love for her; she did miss Pal so much. Then her thoughts turned to Gaynor. Why was it that he had crept into her heart—unknown to her, until now she was afraid to be in his company for fear she would let him see the love that was filling her heart for him, and he a married man! Oh, he would hate her then—as much as she detested herself now—but sometimes it seemed that he, too, loved her. It was all wrong, yet she had not wanted it to be like this. She was not to blame, for Hettie had thrown him with her. One thing was certain

—she must forget him. He would soon be leaving and then would forget and live on and on forever, and dream of the one man that she had told Gaynor of, and meanwhile she would paddle her canoe through life as well as through the rapids; it just took the courage to be true to one's self, that was all.

CHAPTER XIV.

DIANA TELLS GAYNOR WHO THE ONE MAN IS

"Come in the evening, or come in the morning,
Come when youre looked for, or come without warning,
Kisses and welcome you will find here before you,
And the oftener you come here, the more I'll adore you."

Diana awoke early and she went out to the cook's camp, and then to the piazza where the game hung. There stood Mr. Hyde.

"It seemed like a dream to me this morning, after having spent the night thinking of my luck. I came out to see if it were really so.

He held up the bear skin; it was a very large one and great black, soft fur. Diana's eyes sparkled with mischief as she said:

"Do you remember the first time that I ever met you, and you said there was no game in the Maine woods?"

Mr. Hyde laughed joyfully.

"But you forget I also said after that that I believed that there were moose, deer, and dears, here in the Maine woods. I only thought it then. Now I know it from experience."

Diana laughed a merry, ringing laugh, and as Harry came up from his cabin he heard it and turned in the direction from which it came.

"I am thinking," said Mr. Hyde, "that I will remain in Essex this trip, as now I feel sure I won't have to return empty handed at any rate—that is, if I won't be imposing on your hospitality."

"We shall be so glad," said Diana. "You will be very welcome, indeed you will."

"Well, this is what you're up to," cried Harry, as he joined them. "Don't wonder at it. This is enough to make any man smile," and Harry held up the bearskin. "Let's see." Harry counted the game: "two moose, four deer, and a bear. Now, say, that don't look too bad to take back to Essex with us, and all beauties at that."

"Mr. Maxwell, what are you going to do about your deer," asked Mr. Hyde.

"Oh, I don't want to bother getting one home, and then I have been so happy with the *dears* of our party that I did not care to leave their sides for the hunting," and Harry held up his hand as Diana's eyes flashed in his direction.

"Now don't turn the fire of those eyes on me, Diana, for Mrs. Gaynor has been my partner all the way. So no insinuations, whatever."

Ora joined them and they all returned to the cabin. After breakfast they all went to watch the guides load the game on the large boat, and it was toward noon when they started for Essex. Mrs. Medford went in the canoe with Mr. Hyde and his guide, and the others returned as they had come. Gaynor gave a sigh as the canoe left the camp around the bend, and he said:

"I am a different man from the day that I caught a glimpse around that bend, and I hope it will not be many years until we can come here again."

"Many years," said Diana, "well it won't be a year until I come here again. I come here nearly every month in the year. I can always find some one who, like myself, likes the Firs, and the canoeing as well as I do. Pal, he is always ready to come."

Gaynor wondered if this girl really understood herself. She said she did not love Pal, yet it

was always Pal when she spoke tenderly of memories past. Diana looked at Gaynor as he still sat looking over the lake, then she said:

"Cousin, a penny for your thoughts, or they may be like what the little boy said, 'they're not worth a penny.' "

"I was thinking about you," he looked at her and smiled, as he said: "My thoughts are worth much more than a penny. I was thinking about you and Pal."

"Well, what about us?" asked Diana.

"I was just thinking that, although you say Pal is nothing to you, yet I believe, in years to come, Pal will be the one man, if he is not that already, the one man you were telling me about," and he murmured under his breath: "My God, how I wish I were that man."

Diana turned to the paddle and as she sent the canoe flying far out over the waves she let her thoughts drift with the canoe. No she did not think that Pal would ever be the one man, but somehow she did wish that the one man would come quickly, and save her from herself. Then her heart turned cold at the thoughts of Gaynor's going back to his work. It seemed that life would be dark to her then, but why? She had been happy before; all the past years she had been happy without him, and now he would

go back and she would go on with the old life, and he to his, and she would forget—but could she forget? She must forget, she told herself, but she felt and knew that Gaynor did not care for her, and that was all wrong, yet was she to blame? No, oh, no; she had not sought this love, why not let him think that Pal was the one and the one man and save herself and him also. If he returned her love, it could only mean harm to him and her. She would tell Pal if ever he asked her again, that if he entered college and made a success of his work she would be all he wished. She would try and be worthy of Pal, dear old Pal. Yes, he would save her without knowing how nearly she had failed. She wanted Pal to be a great man. Why not let Pal be the one man? One thing was certain: Gaynor should not fill her heart and life as he had been doing of late. She did pity him, living with Hettie. What had ever come between them? She had not been the cause, for Hettie treated him with contempt before he became so dear to her, but she knew that Hettie detested her more than ever before.

She was glad that Harry and Gaynor had not heard her sobbing in the canoe. At the thought her face flushed in shame. To think they had caught her with tears streaming over her face.

The look Gaynor had given her seemed to tell her that he knew what was in her heart, yet he had walked on in silence. Then there was the Rev. Hague. He wanted to be the one man but she could not ever think of him as that, and not even dear old Harry. Pal was the only one she felt could be anything near her one man—the man of her dreams. Yes, she would promise Pal that she would wait for him and then they would all know it. She would try and act her part, and who knows, as time went on, she might in reality find Pal to be the one man.

The old home must always be just the old home still; it must never be divided. Sister would no doubt come and live there and just keep it as Musz had done—a home for every one. She would go out in the world and meet her friends in their homes, after Musz was gone. Then she would promise Pal, and they would be happy, and she would dream on, and on forever of the One Man with the spell of the Firs around her.

"Cousin Diana, you are a long time in thinking it over," broke in Gaynor. "What about that man of your dreams?"

"Cousin Gaynor, Pal is very dear to me," said Diana. "Some day he may realize it."

"Realize it," cried Gaynor. "Has your friend Pal never realized your worth yet?"

"Cousin Gaynor, we are just pals, and Pal never thinks of anything else yet. Some day I may win a place in his heart, and he will learn to care for me. I do love him, and as you said, in years to come he may be the one man."

Diana's words were like a knife in Gaynor's heart. He loved this girl as only once in his life had he loved. Before he met Diana, he did not know what a love meant to a life, but now he knew. He longed to tell her; after her talk about the one man that night at camp, he thought that the one man she spoke of had never come. He knew he could never win Diana through the divorce courts, but he thought of something else. If the one man had not come to Diana in form, he thought this: Hettie was much older than he, and she could not live so very many more years any way, and if the one man had not come into Diana's life by then he would try and fill that place. He would try so hard to be worthy of this girl. He would treat Hettie respectfully in the meantime, for he must be honorable in all his dealings to be worthy to be near Diana even. He would be as true as the man Diana dreamed of; in years to come he had hoped she would be heart-free and he could wait and work for such a prize. But now as Diana told him of her love for Pal, he felt that life held noth-

ing else for him, life would be a slow dying. Oh, if they could only have gone on and on forever, as he had said when they were coming over the rapids; they were under the spell of the firs then, but now—oh, God, what was left for him?

Then Diana once more said:

"But if Pal never asks me to fill that place, and he wins some other girl, why I will just have my camp fire and gaze in it and dream on and on forever of one man. I will be happy just because he is. I will sit by the camp fire and build air castles and gaze on and on forever with my dreams."

"How you must love Pal, to be happy just because he is, though it be in the love of another. Oh, no, Diana, you could not be happy then," said Gaynor, watching her as she sat with averted face.

"But, Cousin Gaynor, indeed I would be happier in seeing that than I would be to see him living with one who would crush the love I craved under foot. That is what hurts, it is not in seeing our loved ones happy, but unhappy; that is what would bring sorrow to my heart."

Gaynor stared into her face as she paused. Then he exclaimed:

"Yes, Diana, and then life is not only worthless, but a hell upon earth. To see what you would give your life for spurned and thrown

away, to break a tender heart, and yet be unable to save that tender heart from pain." Gaynor thought of the love that Diana said was given to Pal unsought, while he only played the role of friend. He knew the love that Diana had to give would come straight from the heart, and this man Pal was simply running away from it and no doubt he would marry another and then break this tender heart, the heart that he would give his life to shield. What a puzzle this life really was. Rev. Hague and Ora ran up beside Gaynor and Diana's canoe, and little Thelma jumped up and exclaimed:

"My, but you all jumped me. I was just dreaming about Pal, and I thought of how he almost stepped off the pier as we were starting the other day. When you folks splashed the paddles side of me, I thought something awful had happened to Pal. I am glad I was just sleeping."

Then, after the canoe had moved slowly forward and she had pulled her head back amid the blankets, little Thelma caught a word now and then of the conversation, but she thought "Aunt Diana said she loved Pal, and I'll tell him that for that will make Pal glad."

"I hope Pal's mother is better," said Ora.

"I do, too, said Mr. Hyde, as he pulled his canoe also near theirs. "He said his mother was

no better the day we came up."

Before long they saw Essex looming up, and little Thelma said:

"My, won't Daddy be glad to see us."

"Yes, dear," answered Mrs. Medford, "and I think we will be so glad to see Daddy, too. I did so want him to come with us. He did want to come, but he could not leave business, and I know he has missed the little folks."

"Yes, and I expect he has missed a little woman, too," said Harry.

Then Harry glanced at Hettie, and his heart went out in sympathy to Gaynor, and he murmured under his breath: "Poor chap!"

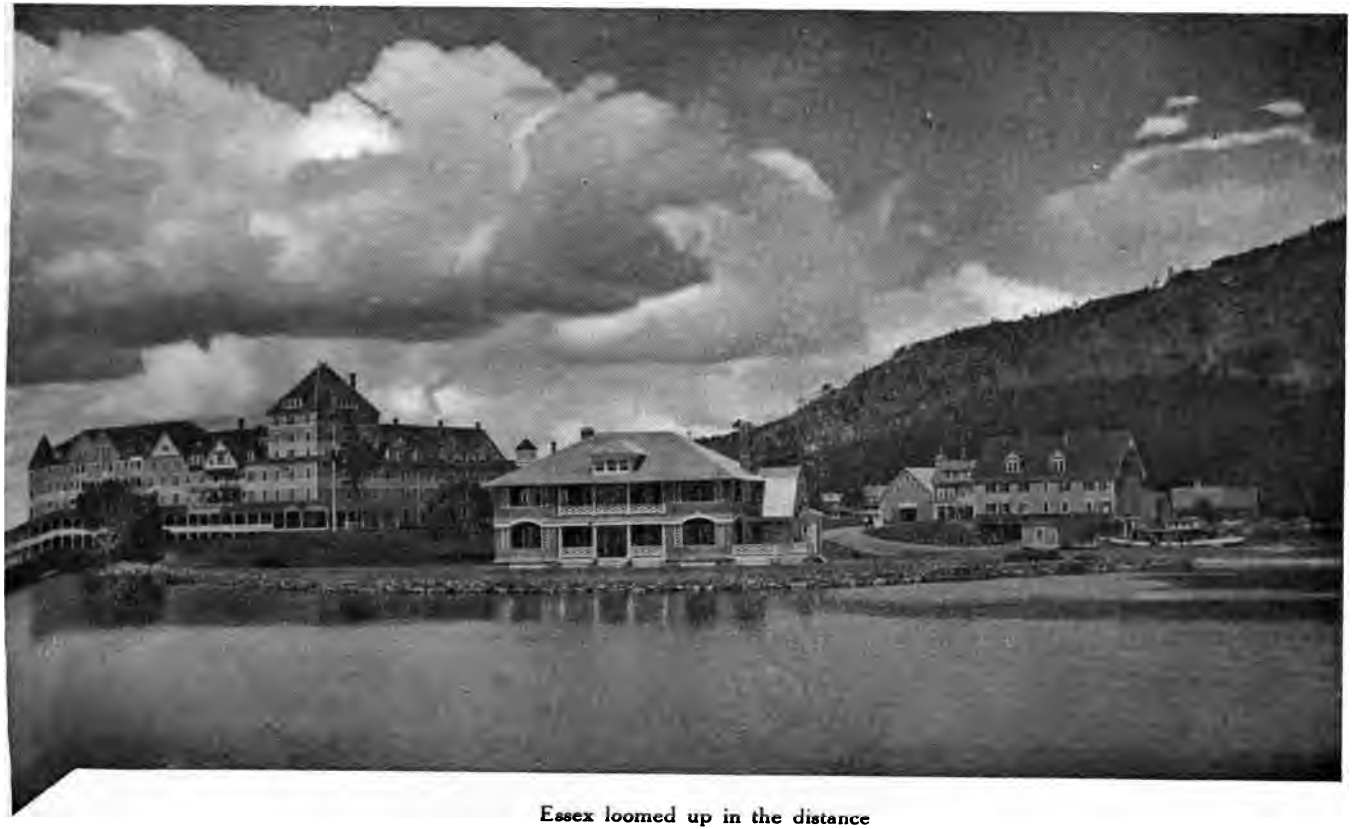
"Love is the greatest thing in the world," called Carl. "Mrs. Medford proves that to us by her sunny life."

"Cousin Carl," called Hettie, "I have heard it said, 'Who loves raves, it is but youth's frenzy,' but the cure is bitterer still."

"That is when they love by word or pen," said Mr. Hyde in his quiet voice. "Mrs. Gaynor, the real love, the only pure, true love, is in deeds and thoughts, and not one of us ever get too old for that."

"What is all this about love?" called Ray, as he caught a word every now and then.

"Mrs. Gaynor is trying to tell us that there is



Essex loomed up in the distance

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no such a thing as love after marriage," answered Harry, "but after seeing the blushes cover your sister's face at the name of Medford, well, we can't believe it."

When the canoes pulled in at the pier, Mr. Medford met them with a jolly ringing laugh, and exclaimed:

"Looks as if you all had a successful trip." Mr. Medford bent and kissed his boy's brow, and then he caught his wife in his arms, and lifted her out, saying: "And how is the little mother?"

Little Thelma flew into her father's arms and cried, "I spect you missed me."

"I spect I did too, you little bunch of conceit."

"Mr. Medford, I thought Pal was with you," said Diana, as she came upon the pier.

Mr. Medford's face clouded as he said:

"Diana, Pal was with me but he lost his mother; she was buried yesterday. Pal can't talk to any one of his loss."

Diana's eyes filled with tears and she walked out to the end of the pier.

"I am heartily sorry for Mr. Duncan," said Mr. Hyde.

"Where is he?" cried Harry.

"He went over to the canoe house," said Mr. Medford.

Harry went over to Diana and said:

"You go up to the house and I will get Pal and bring him up." They all started for the old home after they had bid the Medfords good-by. Aunt Dorotha and Mrs. Sutton were on the veranda waiting them, and as Diana bent to kiss her mother, Aunt Dorotha said, "Diana, you have heard of Mrs. Duncan's death?"

Diana nodded and made way for the others as they bent to kiss the aged face of Aunt Dorotha. Diana saw Harry coming alone, and she ran down to meet him.

"Pal would not come, he went back home, and I am sorry, Di, for he is heart broken."

Diana ran down through the old orchard as she knew Pal would go that way. She would head him off and make him return with her.

Pal was coming slowly, with his head bent down and sobbing like a child. Diana stood beneath the tres until he came up, and then she caught his shoulder and with her face close to his, she said:

"I am so sorry, Pal. I should have stayed here when you needed me."

His face lightened as he saw that it was Diana, and his eyes filled with love as he caught her to him and to his happiness. She did not draw away as it had been her custom to do.

"I have missed you, Di, so much, and I thought

that I would not get to see you before I went away."

"Leave, Pal," cried Diana. "Where are you going?"

"My Aunt has persuaded my father to sell the old place and he has gone with her out West. I am going to settle up the home and then I am going away to school, and prepare for a business life. I can't stay around here, Di, and see you loving another."

"Loving another, Pal! I don't love another."

"Iknow, Di—everybody knows, that the Rev. Hague is here half his time and I can't stand to see it. If you don't love him why do you encourage him?"

"Pal, I do not encourage him," and Diana's eyes flashed as she drew away from Pal's arms. "Pal, it is not true I have never loved the Rev. Hague, and I have never loved any one but you, and you know it."

"Diana, what are you saying?" and again Pal's eyes filled with love. "Do you love me, Di?" and he drew her close to his fast-beating heart. "Will you make me that promise Diana, that you refused me before? I will work so hard for you and try to be all you wish me to be. After my mother was gone, it seemed that there was nobody to care what became of me. The peo-

ple are all talking of you and the Rev. Hague until I just wanted to get as far away as I could, but I could not go without seeing you again."

"Dear, dear old Pal, I have missed you all the time. What would I have thought, to come back and find you gone? Oh, Pal, I could never have stood to lose all that I have so dearly loved!"

"Diana, you told me the last time I offered you my love that you would not promise me to ever love me enough to marry me. What was I to think? But you do love, don't you, Di? Say you do."

"I never knew how much you were to me, Pal, until we went on this trip. I missed you all the time, but you are never to let me go without you again Pal, for I want you near me always."

"Diana, are you sure you mean this. It seems like a dream to me. Oh, Di. If it is a dream I hope I may never awake."

"Pal, I can truthfully say that I never loved anyone in the way I love you. You are too good for me, Pal—you are so pure in heart and soul. I have never loved anyone as I have you." Diana said this from her heart, for she did not love anyone as she did Pal.

Pal told Diana of his mother's death, and he sobbed like a child as he mentioned her name. Diana made Pal promise he would come and

stay with them until they had made all the arrangements at the old home.

"Now, Pal, I must go back, for Mr. Hyde is with us all tonight, and they will miss me."

"I am glad Mr. Hyde has joined you all for I like that man," said Pal.

"Do you know, Pal, that he and Ora met in New York last year, and I believe he and Ora will in time be more than just friends."

"I will like to know him better," said Pal. "I go to New York to college I guess. Had you thought of that, Di? It won't be long now before I will have to go," and Pal gazed into her eyes. He thought he had never loved her as much as now, and he again came close to her side and clasped her in his arms and kissed her lips over and over again. It seemed if he let her go he would wake up and find it all a dream.

"I must go, Pal, I really must," she said, as she pulled out of his arms.

Gaynor had walked on out toward the stables and thought he would wait and return with Diana as he had seen her crossing the field that led to the orchard. He was standing dreaming and viewing the country. He heard voices and then he saw Pal, as he caught Diana to him and rained the kisses over her face.

He turned and went back to Diana's fir nook and lay like one stunned. She had found the one man now. Well, Pal would be a queer man if he could resist the love in this girl's eyes, when she went to comfort him in the loss of his mother. He could not help but see the love in Diana's eyes and he had fancied that it was for him. Oh, God, if he could only exchange places with Pal! Ora and Mr. Hyde had passed on down toward Mr. Duncan's. They heard voices and looked around and beneath the trees they saw Pal clasp Diana in his arms, at the same time Gaynor saw them. Mr. Hyde smiled and said, "We may as well return," then, after a pause, he said, "What a fine pair they are. When I first saw those two together I thought what a splendid couple they were," and he and Ora walked slowly back to the house. Diana soon caught up with them and she went on to tell about Pal's new arrangements, and then she said, "What shall I do when Pal is gone?"

"When is he coming back?" asked Ora.

"Oh, I expect in his vacations he will come here. Of course, his old home will be gone, but he will come and see his friends."

"I expect he will," laughed Ora, "just as long as Diana is in the Maine woods he will come back."

"Are we to congratulate you, Miss Varden?" asked Mr. Hyde.

"I expect it would be all right. It will be nothing new. I have always loved Pal, but I want you all to keep my secret for awhile."

"We will wait your word," said Ora, but she understood why. It was because of Aunt Dorotha's plans regarding the Rev. Hague. Just as they turned in the walk to the house, a lady of small stature stepped up to Diana and asked, "Is this Diana Varden?"

She was carrying a suitcase nearly as large as herself. She had laughing brown eyes, and hair of the same color, and a smile played about her lips. "Yes, I am Diana Varden," said Diana, looking kindly at the girl.

"Miss Ditson is staying here, then, and I am Iola Vandyke."

"Well, of all things," cried Diana, as she held out her hand.

"I must ask pardon for coming so unceremoneously," said the girl. "I hope I am not intruding. I would have sent you word, but I did not think I was so near here, and, when I did realize it, why I thought it was so late I'd just come on. I hope I am not in the way?"

"No, indeed you are not," said Diana; "you

are very welcome to our party. We are always ready for friends whether they warn us or not. I am very glad you came on." Mr. Hyde picked up the heavy suitcase and followed the girls in. Diana could not tell who this girl reminded her of. At first she thought she knew the face, and a rather unpleasant feeling crept into her heart; but when the low, sweet voice fell on her ears she forgot all but the music of that. Ora said, "Diana, do you know that Miss Vandyke makes me think of your cousin May?"

"That is just whom she reminded me of, at first. Now we feel as if we already know you," said Diana, turning to the little girl.

Iola looked into the dark, beautiful face above her and she did not wonder at Viola falling in love with this girl's brother if he were one-half as nice and beautiful as this girl. Viola had shown her Diana's picture, but it was not one-half as beautiful as she was. Viola caught a glimpse of Iola through the trees and ran down to meet her crying, "Iola Vandyke, why didn't you let me know you were coming to-day."

"I was in too big a hurry to get here I expect," said the girl. When Viola introduced Iola to the group on the veranda, Hettie looked

into the little girl's face and she turned deathly pale. Iola noticed the change in Hettie's face and she said, "Have I ever met you before, Mrs. Gaynor? It seems as if I have met you," and she gazed into Hettie's drawn face.

"No, I don't think you have ever met me before," said Hettie in a cold, harsh voice. Iola then turned to Aunt Dorotha and said, "Mrs. Varden, I am intruding on hospitality in coming as I have."

"No, dear," said Aunt Dorotha, "we love young faces, and I am pleased to meet you. Diana show her to her room, as I know after that trip she needs to rest until the supper hour."

Iola was thankful to get a little rest. It seemed so homelike. She followed Diana up the stairs and they were soon chatting like old friends when Viola came up, and Diana rushed out and down to where Maggie and Amos were. She had a place in her heart for the two old and trusted servants; Maggie's face was a broad smile as she said, "Sure and Miss Ora was looking for you a few moments ago. I think she said yer friend Pal was here."

"Well, I am glad he is, aren't you, Maggie?"

"Sure I's glad," said Maggie. "And I am

very glad to hear that, Maggie," said Pal as he stepped in at the kitchen door. He was dressed in black and Diana thought she had never seen Pal look as well.

"Sure, Pal, and they do be telling me yer going to leave Essex," said Maggie. "I am leaving for a time as Essex is very dear to me. I am like Diana, I love the lake, woods and the farms, and I shall return."

"Sure and do that."

"Oh, no, of course not," answered Pal, as he and Diana went out the door and to where the others were seated. Diana went to Aunt Dorotha and told her she had asked Pal to remain with them until he went away to school, and for her to tell him he was welcome. Aunt Dorotha went to Pal and, laying her hand on his arm, she told him he was very welcome. He thanked her and blessed her in his heart for those few words.

"It seems like home to me here," said Iola, as she came out to join them, "like Mamma's house. Always a welcome for everybody." Then the supper bell rang out and they all entered the house.

CHAPTER XV.

AUNT DOROTHA'S WILL AND WHAT PAL SAW IN THE FIR NOOK

To know, to esteem, to LOVE, then to part,
Makes up life's tale to many a feeling heart.

Gaynor did not know how long he lay beneath the fir trees until he heard the bells ringing six o'clock. He jumped to his feet and returned to the house, to find them all emerging from the dining room. By Ora's side was a tiny little lady with soft brown eyes. She was looking up into Ora's face and chatting gaily.

"Let me introduce our new friend, Miss Vandike, Mr. Gaynor," said Diana, coming out behind the two girls. As the girl gazed into his face in a frank open way, he wondered what sounded so familiar in that name; and, too, there was something in the face that reminded him of some one that he knew, and he felt a strange feeling steal over his heart.

"I have just been telling them that it seemed like home to me here," said Miss Vandike. "I

am much in love with the views you get from here."

" "Yes, indeed, this is a haven," said Gaynor as he followed Diana into the dining-room. "Who did you say that girl was?" inquired Gaynor when they were alone.

"She is a friend of Viola's, but a much sweeter girl I'm thinking. Let us hope so. She reminds me of some one, but I can't tell just who," said Gaynor.

"I thing she looks like Cousin May," said Diana, "but after hearing her voice one forgets all but that."

"She seems a very charming little body," said Gaynor, then he let his eyes rest on Diana's face, as he said, "I see Mr. Duncan is here to-night."

Diana then related to him the changes Pal was making and of his leaving. She sighed. Gaynor said, "What about the One Man now, Cousin?"

"Oh, I am just going to dream on and on for ever, I guess."

Ora and Miss Vandike came out on the veranda, Harry made room for them by his side. He did not know why, but, when this girl talked, it reminded him of Diana. She was a sweet little soul, this soft-eyed Iola; he enjoyed

having her near him. Hettie had thought when she heard the name from Viola, that there might be many Vandikes in the world, but now, after gazing into this girls eyes, she could plainly see the eyes of her lover of old. She hated this girl with as great hatred as the great love she had had for her father. To do Hettie justice, she had been true to her love for this girl's father, and she trusted him. But, after reading the note he left, she thought if ever he crossed her path, he would suffer for his deceit. As she watched the girl, Iola raised her soft eyes to Hettie's face as if she knew Hettie was looking her way. All of a sudden she exclaimed, "I know now who you make me think of."

"Who is it," said Hettie, cold and harsh.

"Oh, it is a picture papa has in his room. An old friend of his. Miss Brown was her name, I think. She was sitting on the arm of papa's chair. He thinks a great deal of the picture. I think it is that face that you remind me of, but, of course, you could never have known papa, as he is living in his home state. I don't think he ever got this far away from home, since he and mamma were married. They come up north somewhere, but I don't remember the place. It seems as if I know you now."

Hettie watched her as she talked, and every gesture. Hettie arose and entered the house; in the living room she found Carl and Mrs. Sutton with Aunt Dorotha. A bright fire was burning in the grate. As Hettie entered, Mrs. Sutton said, "I was just getting ready to run home, Hettie, and was telling mother to have the young people to gather in here, around the fire as it is too cold for them out on the veranda."

"It will be fine in here," said Hettie, drawing a chair near her aunt.

Mrs. Sutton went quietly to her mother and kissed her brow and left the room. Now is my chance to post Aunt Dorotha on the will business, thought Hettie. She talked to Aunt Dorotha in regard to Carl's marriage, and tryed to make her see why Carl deserved the old home, and she wanted her to divide equally the rest between Mrs. Sutton and Diana. You see the girls are sure to make homes of their own; it will not be long before Diana will leave you, I am thinking."

Carl had crept out as Hettie spoke of the subject to Aunt Dorotha. Hettie told her, now that Mr. Smith was here, it was the time for her to make the will, as he was a lawyer, and why not have it settled right now, while Aunt

Dorotha thought of it. Hettie was very sweet to her, as she praised Carl in glowing colors. Aunt Dorotha, child-like, believed her to be true. Hettie then called Carl and Mr. Smith in and told them what Aunt Dorotha wanted. Smith said, "I would much rather you would have some one else to make this will, Mrs. Varden."

He understood what it would mean to Diana, and he knew it was more Mrs. Gaynor's doings than it was Carl's. He called Carl to one side and told him that Diana might blame him for this, should she become dissatisfied.

"I would feel like a cur, Carl, after her kindness to me during my stay here."

Carl turned on his heel and went back to the fire, and Smith could see he was angry. Then he said the same words to Aunt Dorotha, and Aunt Dorotha said, "Well, Mr. Smith, you know us better than the other lawyers, and you will do this for me, please," then he thought, why not—if they would have it made that way. Aunt Dorotha can have it changed if she choose. He would tell Diana of it and tell her to talk to her mother. So he sat down and asked for the pen and ink, saying, "I will do my best." He soon had it written out and they called Harry and Della

to witness it. When Smith explained Della turned and walked out. Harry cast his eyes on Mrs. Gaynor, then turned and looked at Carl. Carl's eyes fell under the frank open countenance of Harry.

Then Harry said, "witness it yourself, Smith. I am not in any such dirty under-handed business—not yet."

He went to Aunt Dorotha who sat silently weeping, kissed her sweet face and said, "Aunt Dorotha, don't you fret. Diana will look after your comfort," and he turned and walked out. Smith felt like he wanted to throw the cursed thing in the fire and tell Carl just what he thought of it and him, too. He could help Diana later; he felt that he could, and he would. Carl went out and soon returned with Rev. Hague. As he entered he said, "Rev. Hague and Hettie can sign this."

Rev. Hague read it over and said, "This is just as you wish it, is it Mrs. Varden."

Aunt Dorotha replied, "Yes," in a low whisper, and they signed the paper. Smith and Rev. Hague passed out. As Smith entered the veranda Della caught his arm and led him out the walk.

"Why, dear," she burst out, "that will was unjust. Aunt Dorotha does not know what

she is doing. Diana will blame you for it. Whatever made you write it that way?"

"I could not refuse. I did refuse and they insisted on it, and Carl became angry. I know of some others who might make it much harder on Diana. I could make it read to help her. You see, Diana and Mrs. Sutton will receive as much if not more in currency."

"But it is not what Diana loves," said Della. "Why did they not own the home together and keep it as it is. It was Mrs. Gaynor at the bottom of the whole thing, and, like Bessie and Marie, I hate her."

"Hush, Della, child, you are not like yourself," said Smith.

"It is so cruel to treat Diana like that," said Della.

Smith said, "I wish I had refused and stuck to it, but I can't help it now, Della."

"I know, dear, it put you in a hard place, but poor Diana, it will break her heart to give up the old home."

Gaynor had walked down the walk, and he heard the voice as he listened to Della and Smith as they slowly walked along. He sat like a statue. What would Hettie do next. He decided he would take some blankets and sleep out under the fir trees, as he enjoyed

the balsom, and it would remind him of camping out. He turned and walked over to the garden and came up on Marie, Bessie, John and Ray. He told them of his plans, and the boys said they would join him. He entered the veranda and found Harry and Miss Vandyke alone; soon Rev. Hague joined them and they talked for some moments, when Carl called them in by the fire. They rose and followed Miss Vandyke in where the others were seated around the great fire. Diana was seated at her mother's feet, and her mother's hand rested on her raven crown. The Rev. Hague rose and said he must leave them, as he had to go to his room and prepare his sermon for the morrow, but he hoped to see them all at church. As he left Viola asked Ora to play and sing some. Ora arose and went to the piano, and told Diana, Miss Vandyke, Harry and any others who would help, to join her. She sang soft and low, and Miss Vandyke also sang in a musical touching voice. Diana still sat at her mother's knee and listened. When Mr. Hyde and Pal came in they drew near Aunt Dorotha's chair. Mr. Hyde said, "I am making a proposition to Mr. Duncan to come and work in my office instead of entering college. I would help him with his

studies and he could have the actual experience, besides his studying, and it would prepare him for business life. What do you say, Miss Varden?"

"Oh! I hope he will, and consent to remain under your care, Mr. Hyde; it will mean more than college to him."

"I thought so myself, Di," said Pal, and he bent near and whispered, "I could come for you all the sooner."

She gazed in his eyes and smiled. "Well, it is settled, is it, Mr. Duncan, that I am to have you with me?" said Mr. Hyde.

"I shall appreciate it very much, and I will try and repay you for your kindness to me," answered Pal.

Mr. Hyde said, "It will be a comfort and a pleasure to have you with me, Mr. Duncan," and he then turned to the music.

Hettie had kept her eyes on Iola. She was the petted child of the man who had wronged her life, and Iola's mother was the woman who had kept him from fulfiling his promise to her, and he still had her picture to remember the girl he had fooled. She wanted to make him suffer for it all now. Her face was flushed, and she felt a tightening around her heart as she pictured him joking over her picture.

Gaynor sat gazing at Diana as her eyes were resting on the fire. He wondered if she were still dreaming of the one man. Harry turned to Diana, as they finished the song, and said, "Now, Diana, we are going to rest and let you give us some music."

"Please do," cried little Iola, "please do." Gaynor bent over to Diana and whispered, "Sing 'Some Days When Dreams Come True.'" She felt her heart beat wildly, as she went to do his bidding. Soon her sweet voice rang out, and, as before, she sang straight from the heart. Mr. Hyde rose and went to the piano, and little Iola bent forward as the grand, sweet voice rang out in raptures at the marvelously beautiful girl who was singing. John had heard Diana's voice, and Marie, Bessie and Ray followed him to the veranda where they paused and listened.

Smith and Della, too, were sitting on the veranda, and Smith was wondering what Diana's dreams really were, and if by his hand they would be prevented from being realized. As Diana's voice died away it ended in a sob, and Della's tears fell over her cheeks.

"I tell you what," said Ray, "Miss Ora, if she is a professional, can't beat Dianna when it comes to singing."

"Oh, that was beautiful," said little Iola, as Diana closed the song. "Sing some more, please do."

"I think that is my part now," said Diana. They all insisted that she sing just one more. She went once more and stood by Ora, who was playing a low strain on the piano. Then again the sweet voice rang out.

"I am dreaming of home, dear old home—home of my childhood and mother." Diana sang slow and sweet, and Harry's face clouded as he thought, and he gazed at Carl and Viola. Pal had quickly risen and left the room as the words fell on his ears. Diana never thought of the wound she was waking in Pal's heart by this song until she was nearly done singing. As she finished she left the room and followed Pal out the walk, where she saw his tall form going ahead of her.

The others were preparing to go to rest when Gaynor turned to Harry and said, "I have decided I would sleep another night out under the fir trees—want to join me, Harry?"

"Don't mind if I do," said Harry. The young people left Aunt Dorotha with a good-night kiss and went to their rooms. After they had all left, Gaynor seated himself by Aunt Dorotha's side, and said, "Auntie, this has been the

best part of my life here in your home, and I want you to know how much I appreciate your kindness to me." Aunt Dorotha went on to tell him he was very welcome, for Hettie was her brother's child. Gaynor then went on to tell Aunt Dorotha what a blessing Diana was to her.

"Yes," answered Aunt Dorotha, "the old home would not have been much but for the care that Diana gives it."

Gaynor tried to impress on her mind how much more she meant than Carl to the old home and Aunt Dorotha's comfort. Gaynor helped Aunt Dorotha to her room, and went out under the fir trees, where he found John, Ray and Harry waiting for him. Diana had come up to Pal, where he was sobbing bitterly down under the trees by the walk.

She went to him and said, "Pal, dear old Pal, I do wish I had never sung at all. It has made you unhappy."

Pal reached out and drew her near to him, saying, "I love your voice, Diana. I love every part of you, and yet it made me sad to hear those words. But Di—I forget everything when you're near to me."

Pal pulled her to him until her head rested on his shoulder, and he gazed into the up-

turned face, and kissed her over and over again.

"Diana, I am the happiest man on earth. Why wouldn't I be with this prize before me? I will succeed, Diana, I will, believe me, I will."

Ora and Mr. Hyde came down the walk and Diana and Pal rose to meet them. They all sat beneath the trees until the moon shed its bright rays over them, and they were loathe to enter the house when the clock pealed out midnight. Then they rose and entered quietly, and, as they were afraid they might disturb the sleepers, Ora ran lightly up the stairs and Diana was about to follow when she heard steps behind her. She thought it was Pal returning from his room for something, and turned to come face to face with Gaynor.

He said, "Diana, what are you doing. I thought you were in the land of dreams." Diana explained to him why they were so late getting in, but then she said, "I would ask you what you are doing."

"I came in for some more blankets, as it has begun to get chilly out there."

Then they both heard Ora scream, and they rushed up the stairs to see Hettie standing in the door of Iola's room with a revolver in her hand. They just caught sight of Ora as she

dashed up and threw Hettie's arm in the air, and the shot went into the ceiling, instead of into the body of the innocent girl who was sleeping so soundly.

Gaynor rushed past Diana and grabbed Hettie by the arm crying, "Hettie, my God, woman, are you crazy. What do you mean?" and he pulled Hettie into their room.

Ora turned a white, shocked face to Diana, and then they heard some one in the hall below. Diana hurried down to find Pal and Mr. Hyde. Nothing happened—just a revolver fell. I hope it did not wake anyone."

Smith heard the words, "nothing happened," and he returned to bed.

Diana then went back up the stairs and found Ora walking the floor of their room.

"Diana, I am afraid of that woman. She must be crazy!" Diana sat down and tried to think. She could not understand this move of Hettie's. She surely must be crazy to try and shoot that little girl that she had never seen before.

Ora said she had just reached the top stair when she saw Mrs. Gaynor raise the revolver. "As she pointed it at Iola—I screamed, and she turned and laughed a weird, low, wild laugh, and then pointed it again at the sleep-

ing Yola. I don't know how I ever reached her in time. Poor, poor Mr. Gaynor. We should go to his assistance, Diana, he may need help!"

"I will go at once," said Diana, rising. She crossed the hall lightly and tapped on the door.

"It is I, Diana," said Diana in a low voice. "May I come in?"

"Yes, come," answered Gaynor. Diana found Gaynor bathing Hettie's head. She was in a swoon on the bed. "I can't understand, Cousin Gaynor—she must be ill."

Gaynor never answered; his face had a set, hard look on it, and his eyes had a cold glint in them that Diana had never seen there before. She spoke no more, but began bathing Hettie's head and rubbing her hands. She took down the red hair and put her tenderly back on the bed.

As Hettie opened her eyes, she broke out into a wild, ringing laugh, that ended in a moan, then she rattled on, "I hope that Vandyke will know that I am avenged now. He ruined my girlhood and now I have killed his girl."

Then she laughed the low, wild laugh that sent shivers creeping over Diana. "I loved him then, but after that note, my love turned to hate. He broke my heart—little did he think I would ever find a way to be avenged, and little does he know

that his child is living. May would kill him did she know that he was her father. Yes, May would hunt the world over to get a chance to kill him. Now he can come and take his precious Iola away, and I'll tell him that I did it. I'll tell him to look at May and then think of Iola. Ha, ha! They are both his children, and it is high time that he knew it. Gaynor, poor fool—he thought I loved him. Love him!" and again she burst out into laughter. "I had to have a home and he was the only way. Vandyke had all the love I ever had to give, and now he has my hate as well. Gaynor will be free to seek his fair Diana, after the electric chair claims its prey. But I want to see Vandyke and tell him to get his girl's body, and that I did it, I did it!"

Diana tried to soothe Hettie as she rattled on and then it came to her what the wild words really meant. Her heart went out in sympathy to the man who was trying to curb the wicked tongue by loving words and caresses. As Hettie mentioned Diana, he could stand no more; he caught her by the shoulder and said:

"Hettie, hush, for Heaven's sake, hush," but she still rattled on.

Diana shook her roughly, saying: "Hettie, stop that, stop at once."

Then she looked into the dark eyes of the girl,

and ceased her wild mumblings for a few moments. Gaynor sat sobbing as only a strong man can sob, his head bowed in shame.

"Cousin Gaynor, I am going to phone for Dr. Smith, for Hettie is delirious."

After she left the room Gaynor thought: all his past was now known to Diana, and the history of the woman that he had tried to shield. He must tell Diana all now; he could not have her think he knew of this wretched life of this woman, who now laughed at the love and kindness he had tried to shield her with.

Diana soon returned. She had put a silken kimono on, and her jettie ringlets fell around her pale face.

"Now, Cousin Gaynor, you go over there and rest and forget it all until Dr. Smith comes," and Diana caught his shoulder and led him to the couch. She bent over him to place a pillow under his head. He lifted his tear-wet eyes to the girl's face, and he was enraptured at the wondrous beauty of the girl.

She bent forward and her dark scented hair fell over his face, and he thought in all his life he had never seen any one half as fascinating as Diana. Her dark eyes were filled with love, pity, and back of it all, there lurked a great fear. She went back to Hettie's side and knelt and

spoke lovingly to her, calling her name. Gaynor wondered at the beautiful character of the girl as she tenderly worked over Hettie—the woman who had tried to take her life in the rapids. He could not ever understand Diana. Then his mind turned to the little soft-eyed girl, who, but for Ora, would now be in kingdom come. She was Hettie's lover's child, but how could Hettie have the heart to injure this little girl who, unconsciously, had entered the hearts of them all, with her soft, musical voice and soft eyes, so gentle, and so kind to all. He did not blame Hettie for feeling bitter toward him, but this little girl!

Gaynor closed his eyes, and fell asleep and did not awaken until Diana called him, and told him that Dr. Smith was there. Then he realized what had happened. Dr. Smith went to the bed where Hettie still muttered wild words, and the Doctor said:

"She has brain fever," and his face shadowed. "She is a very sick woman and will require good nursing." He turned to Gaynor, saying:

"I would advise you to engage a nurse at once," but Diana broke in:

"Dr. Smith, I am going to nurse her. I will do just as you say," and Gaynor gave a sigh of re-

lief, for he could not stand to have Hettie's history known by any other, and with Diana her crimes were safe, he well knew that.

"But, my dear girl, you don't realize what this will mean for you have a houseful of company now, and if you undertake to nurse this woman, you will have more than you can manage. It will be some time before she is herself again."

"I know all about that, Dr. Smith, but I can do it if you can trust me."

"Trust you, my girl; indeed I can trust you, but what about your own strength?"

"If I fail, then you can engage a nurse," said Diana.

"It shall be just as Dr. Smith says," answered Gaynor, as they both looked at him, and then the old Doctor said:

"We will let Diana have her way," and he looked lovingly at the dark-haired girl. He gave Diana directions and left them.

In the morning Gaynor woke to find Diana gone and Hettie sleeping, breathing heavily, the dread fever covering her face, and he gazed in pity.

Diana had worked over Hettie all night, and it was only with the first flush of dawn that she had quieted down, and gone into a deep

sleep. Diana heard the others moving about downstairs, and she saw Hettie was still sleeping, so she stole out and went down the stairs. She sought Ora first, and begged her not to mention the shooting, and explained Hettie's illness. Ora promised, and then Diana went out to meet the others. Ora begged her to rest, but she said: "Later on I will, but we must make arrangements for them all to get to church this morning," and she hastened out to where she found the others all gathered on the veranda. She told them of Hettie's illness, and that she had been up with her all night.

"I should say you were the ill one, Aunt Di," called Marie.

"Oh, no; not me," laughed Diana, but her eyes were heavy.

Diana made arrangements for them all to go to church and Mr. Hyde and Smith said:

"Aren't you going, too?"

"Not while Hettie needs me," she had answered them.

Pal followed her into the house and begged her to rest until their return from church. She told him not to worry about her, but for him to plan so they would not miss her all day.

Mrs. Medford had sent a message that she wanted the party to spend the following day at

her place, for which Diana felt very grateful. The next day, Mrs. Sutton gave a lawn party and as the days passed on, the party forgot Hettie and her harsh ways, but they all missed Diana as only now and then was she with them. Hettie was still very ill, and Diana would not let any one in the room as she rattled on continuously of Vandyke and Gaynor. And Gaynor had begged Diana to rest as he saw the dark shadows gathering under her tired eyes. She would only go to her room for a few hours' rest, or run back to the fir nook and rest, but she could not sleep.

Diana found Hettie talking wildly again, and she went to her side and talked soothingly until she fell into a deep sleep.

Gaynor was astonished to see Hettie clasp the girl's hand and fall into a sleep. She slept on, and on, and Gaynor never moved, as he watched the face of Diana as she, too, stood by Hettie like a statue, it seemed to the man that watched them that Diana never moved a muscle.

Doctor Smith came in and he quickly went to the bed and said:

"This is the beginning of the end. She must be kept quiet, perfectly quiet, and we may pull her through. In twenty-four hours, there will be a great change." Then he turned and gazed

into the face of the girl with the heavy dark eyes, deep and thoughtful at all times, but now with a weird, wild fear in them. He noticed the pale cheeks, and when he left he said to Gaynor:

"As soon as there is a change, send for me at once. I will bring a nurse with me for Diana can not stand much more of this. We will know before long and we hope for the better."

Gaynor begged Diana to rest that night, but she would not leave the bed where Hettie lay, and it was not until the next day that Diana noticed Hettie breathed more freely, and she knew that she was better. Then it crossed her mind of how she had sat by Hettie, day by day, and knowing that Hettie hated her. Would her illness change her, she wondered, and if this change had not been for the better how it would have affected her future life, for she at times believed Gaynor loved her. She loved Pal, yes, she loved Pal. But when she thought of Gaynor's freedom there was a strange feeling around her heart. She loved him more than ever for the kindness he had bestowed on the woman who had called him a fool, and a tool and of how she hated him, still, through it all, Gaynor had treated her with tenderness and sympathy.

Indeed she did love Pal, but not in the way

she loved Gaynor. Dear old Pal would soon be going away too. Hettie slowly opened her eyes, and gazed in wonder at Diana, who sat near her.

"You are much better, Hettie," Diana said kindly, "for you have been ill, Hettie, very ill, and we will be so glad to know you are so much better."

"Have I been ill?" asked Hettie weakly.

"Yes, Hettie, and Cousin Gaynor has been nearly distracted over your illness. Shall I call him?" and Diana rose, but Hettie caught her hand and said:

"Did I talk in my illness, Diana?" and Hettie looked into the girl's face for she knew Diana would not lie to her.

"Of course you rattled on some, Hettie, like we all do when we are ill, but nobody has been in this room but Dr. Smith, your husband, and myself since you were taken ill."

She caught Diana, saying:

"You don't hate me, Diana, do you?"

"No, Hettie, why should I. I only pity you. But you are going to begin a new life, Hettie, with the new strength God has given you, and forget all the old hate. We all like you, Hettie, and Ora and Iola have begged to come to see you. Promise, Hettie, to forget the malice now

in your heart, and place love there instead. We cannot help the past, but we can do better in the future. Hettie, nobody knows about this trouble but Ora, and she lays it to your illness that night. From me, nobody shall ever know. Now Cousin Hettie, listen. Promise to live for love hereafter, will you?"

Diana bent near the pale face. Hettie's tears were falling fast now.

"Cousin Gaynor has sat by you and shed tears as he caressed you. You should try and be kind to him, for he has suffered, too."

"Did he care, Diana?" quickly asked Hettie.

"Care," repeated Diana, "you nearly broke his heart."

Hettie sobbed aloud as Diana told her this. Diana felt it was best for her to know all, for she would worry herself back again if she lived in doubt. As Hettie's sobs died away, she said:

"Diana I will try and be worthy of Gaynor's care after this. I promise you faithfully. Can you believe me?"

"Yes, Cousin Hettie, I am sure you will have a happier life after this."

Just then the door opened quietly, and Gaynor came slowly in and walked to the bed. He saw Hettie's eyes full of tears; he bent and kissed her brow, for he knew reason had re-

turned. Diana arose and went to the door. As she passed out, Gaynor heard a low moan and he knew it came from Diana. He quickly followed her to the door and saw her disappearing into her own room. Dr. Smith met him and they returned to Hettie. Dr. Smith broke into a cheery laugh as he saw reason had once more returned. He said:

"Bless my heart, little woman, but you have had a bad time of it. Now you are surprising me with this recovery."

"Many thanks to you, Doctor," Hettie said.

"No, not me, but your faithful nurse," he replied. "Miss Diana has stayed by you night and day."

"Diana has been very kind to me," said Hettie, "and I shall want her near me until I am well." "Where is she?" said Dr. Smith.

"She went to her room," said Gaynor. "I will call her."

"He went to her door and rapped gently, saying:

"Dr. Smith has come."

She answered in a low quivering tone: "I will come in a moment, Cousin Gaynor."

He returned to find Hettie smiling, and a new light in her eyes from any he had ever noticed there before. Diana came in after a few sec-

onds, and her eyes were red and weary.

"I am going to send a nurse to relieve you, Diana, in a short time, then I want the blushes and fire to come back into that face."

For the first time Hettie had noticed the girl's appearance, and she said:

"I shall hate to change nurses, Doctor, but you will come in often, Diana, won't you?"

"Indeed I will, and I hope the others will soon be allowed to come, for they are all anxious to see you."

"Yes, they can soon come in and see her," said the Doctor. "That is, if she improves as fast under the new nurse as she has under you, Diana. She will soon be up again, now, little girl," and he patted Diana on the shoulder. "Run along and rest; just rest to-day, then to-morrow join the young people and get the roses back into your cheeks, and the sparkles back to the eyes. When I send the nurse, Mr. Gaynor, you leave Mrs. Gaynor to her; she is a trusted lady, and you also need to get out into the air and rest."

Hettie had noticed Gaynor's white, set face as he entered, and the kindly light that changed it as he bent to kiss her. She reached up her arms and drew his head down to her while she sobbed like a baby, and it was then he heard

the moan escape Diana's lips. He wondered what had come over Hettie, and yet he was glad to see the change. Diana and Dr. Smith passed out into the hall and he said:

"I am very proud of my nurse. You have been the means of saving that life, Diana, and you should be well paid for the service. You will, dear," he said tenderly. "There is a wonderful change in that woman already."

After the Doctor left, Diana ran out the back way and crept back to the nook in the fir trees. She threw herself down and her grief burst forth in great sobs that shook her whole frame. To see Gaynor come to Hettie and kiss her and caress her had been like a dagger plunged into her heart; yet it was her own doings that had caused that reconciliation between the two. Yet she believed Hettie meant to be different now, but it cut her to the hearrt, and she could not tell why. But she felt heart sick and weary, and let her tears flow unforbidden, then she fell into a deep sleep.

As she lay sleeping, Gaynor entered the path and saw her. He looked down on the pale face lined with tears; he drew near her and sat beside her quietly looking, loving, and longing. He watched her bosom rise and fall with great sighs, then he saw a smile play over her face,

and it was like sunshine through rain. She threw up her arms as if clasping something and said:

"Cousin Gaynor, it is the one man of my dreams come to life," and then she sank back again still sleeping. Yes, she was dreaming of Pal. the one man of her dreams.

"Just to know that you love me, Cousin Gaynor, is more than all the world to me, but don't go away. Oh, Pal."

As Gaynor heard Diana, he sat stupefied. Poor girl, she was tired, and this sleep was a nerve restorer. But as she raised her arms again, he could not stand it any longer. He caught her to him, although he feared the look in the dark eyes should she awake. He kissed her over and over again as he drew her to his breast, and as he did, she reached up and clasped her arms about his neck. Her lips met his in a long, lingering kiss; he held her to him as if he would never let her go. Her warm breath fanned his cheeks, and he wished the end would come for him now, for an instant she was all his. She said again:

"Do you return my love?"

"I love you more than life, more than Heaven itself, Diana. God knows how much I love you," and then she laid her head back on his

arm, with a smile and pillowed her head on his breast. She slept on and on. Was it possible this girl loved him? No, for she had said she loved Pal. and those caresses were for Pal. Gaynor felt like a cur, as he thought of what he had stolen. Diana must never know; he must get away before she woke up. He turned to lay her back on the fir pillows and she reached up again and drew his head close to hers and again their lips met. Then he gazed into her face.

When Gaynor put her back on the fir pillows, a man stepped up the trail, and watched him as he kissed her lips, and as her arms fell from his shoulders, the man stood as if he had been shot. He lay his hand on his heart, and stumbled to a tree trunk, and leaned up against it. Then he saw Gaynor disappear up the trail amid the trees. What could it mean? Was that Diana in Gaynor's arms? Was it possible that it was she?

"My God, it can't be," burst from his lips "I believed her so pure and good. It can never be my Diana," then Pal staggered to where the girl lay. He stumbled and fell, and his hat flew in her face ,and she raised up startled. She gazed about her in wonder and amazement, until her eyes fell on Pal.

"Oh, Pal, how you frightened me," she said, as she got up. Then she saw his pale face and cold eyes turned on her.

"What is the trouble, Pal?" she cried. "Are you hurt?"

"Hurt," he said, dazed like; "hurt. My God, Diana, you have broken my heart."

"I Pal?" she said tenderly coming toward him. She knelt by his side, and put her hand on his shoulder, as he sat with bowed head. He pulled away and said: "Don't even come near me again, Diana Varden. Now I know why you were upset in the rapids. Mrs. Gaynor upset you because you stole her husband's love, and I understand why for all those weeks you have nursed Mrs. Gaynor. It was to be near him. Diana, you, the girl I love, the pal of my youth, allow a married man to love you. I thought you were so good and pure before to-day. I see and understand now why you were not sure you loved me. Why did you ever try to win my love, Di, and then use it as a sham for him? I can hardly believe it yet, Di. It is like a nightmare, but oh, it is too true. Now I know."

Diana sat like one dreaming still. What could Pal mean. Who had been telling him such tales? Surely no one ever knew Gaynor even held one thought in her heart. As Pal went on, she felt her heart cut, and a cold shivery feeling went over her. What could it mean? She did love Pal, and she had been true to him, and more

and more he was filling her heart, and now what had happened.

"Pal, oh, Pal. What are you saying? I have never been untrue to you."

"Never been untrue?" he said. "I suppose you are true when you lay in Gaynor's arms and press him to you. I suppose you are true, too, when your lips press his."

"Pal, Pal, you don't know what you are saying. Me kiss Gaynor? I never kissed any one's lips but my mother's, not even yours, Pal, much as I love you."

He rose and walked away from her. "Diana Varden, don't make me hate you! Don't add lying to your sins. You have enough to answer for to your Maker."

"But, Pal, it is untrue. I never lay in Gaynor's arms. I never clasped my arms around him. I never kissed him. Believe me or not, Pal Duncan, you have insulted me by mentioniing such a thing." Diana rose and her eyes flashed fire as she spoke.

"My God, Di, how can you talk like that?" She drew near, and said in a pleading voice:

"Pal, dear old Pal, you don't believe this of me, surely you don't," he turned and walked away and she cried:

"For Heaven's sake, Pal, don't go like that. You know it is not true."

He kept walking on, with his head bowed down on his breast.

"Pal, come back, just one moment. Pal, come back. I love you, Pal, more than any one on earth."

He did not turn, but disappeared around the bend of the path. Diana threw herself on the firs, and wept as if her heart would break.

As Gaynor walked away, he heard voices, and he stopped. Then again he heard a man's harsh voice, then he heard Diana's pleading. He wondered had anyone seen him with Diana, then he heard Diana's voice call out, "Pal, I love you more than anything on earth," he stepped back in the brush as Pal passed him. Could it be possible that Pal had seen and blamed her. He had turned from the pleadings of Diana and rushed away. He must not spurn Diana. He surely could not go away from the love pleadings of this girl. He watched Pal as he went on through the woods and crossed the fields. Could it be that he had seen him with Diana in his arms and blamed her for what she did not know herself. After all, the kindness of this girl to himself and Hettie. He must see Pal, and tell him. Pal would think him a low-down cur, and yet, perhaps that was not the cause of

their words. He would go to Diana first. As he came to the nook, he heard her weeping. It cut him to the heart to hear her, but he must be true to his trust now.

He said gently, "Cousin mine, what is the cause of those tears. I fear you have worked over Hettie until your strength is gone and you're ill."

"No, no, Cousin Gaynor," she said as she sat up and brushed the tears from her eyes. "I am unhappy over some false tales that somebody has been telling Pal. He just came to me and he seems to believe them and that is what hurts, for they were an insult to me. Instead of resenting the tales, Pal believes them, and he came to me and accused me. He would not believe me, Cousin Gaynor. He said somebody told him. No, he did not say that, but I know somebody must have told him, that I let you clasp me in your arms, and kiss my lips, and you a married man, Cousin Gaynor. Pal should have known me well enough to have known, no matter if I loved you better than life itself, I could never forget myself enough for that, Cousin Gaynor. It was an insult—a wicked lie and told to make Pal hate me. He should know me better than that, Cousin Gaynor," and now she rose and her eyes flashed fire.

Dr. Smith could not wish to see more fire return to the eyes, as Diana thought of how Pal had spurned her.

"Cousin Gaynor, I love Pal, but I never intend to speak to him until he apologizes to me for ever believing this insult. You will tell him, and the whole crowd, that this is not so, Cousin Gaynor, won't you?"

"Indeed I shall, Diana. I will find Pal at once and tell him the truth," and Gaynor rose and went to seek Pal.

Yes, he would tell Pal the truth, bitter as it was for him to do. Diana should not be blamed, and her great love should not be thrown aside for Pal Duncan. He was not worthy of the love of this girl. When Gaynor reached the house Ora and Hyde were seeking Diana, for Mr. Hyde and Pal were going back to Hyde's camp.

"Well, I shall see Miss Varden as I return," said, Hyde, as he left them.

As Gaynor reached the pier, Hyde and Pal were far out in the lake, and he knew he would have to wait and see Pal on his return. Gaynor turned back to the house and his heart was heavy, for this would cause Diana sadness. If Pal really loved this girl it would cause him, too, to spend many lonely

hours. He would tell Pal all even yet, and he did not think Pal would blame him for loving this wonderful creature. He would tell him that Diana had told him of her love for Pal beside the great campfire, and what this love had meant to her. Yes, he would make it all right with Pal. Then he thought of the joy of those few moments, when Diana's lips touched his. It seemed they were meant for him alone—but no, they had been meant for the one man of her dreams.

CHAPTER XVI.

WHAT THE MAINE WOODS TAUGHT GAYNOR

"Good-bye and good luck be with you."

When the days grew cool, and Jack Frost visited the Maine woods, Diana's guests bade her good-bye. Carl returned to Chicago with Viola, and Smith, Bessie and Della were to spend a few days at Ora's home, also little Iola. Then Ora and Iola would go on to New York; Ora to her work there, and Iola would go to her home in Oregon. Diana had prom-

ised Iola she would visit her as soon as Carl returned from Chicago. It had been nearly two weeks since Pal and Mr. Hyde had left them. Hettie and Gaynor would leave on the morning train. Marie, John, Ray and Diana were at the station, and bade all a cheery good-bye. Smith told Diana that he had never spent as happy a vacation, and if ever she needed a friend not to forget to call on him. Della and Bessie had planned to return the week before Christmas. Ora pressed Diana's lips and murmured, "I will fathom the trouble out between you and Pal yet, and I will expect you to visit me during the winter."

Harry clasped Diana's hand and kissed her brow, and said, "Dear old friend, keep the spell of the firs always around you and us all. Iola begged Diana to make it real soon that she would come to her home. The train slowly wound out and away from Essex, and left Diana alone with the Firs. As they were going back to the old home Ray caught up to Diana—who had started on alone, and he said, "How is Pal making it in New York, Diana?"

"I have not heard yet, but then I know he will succeed," answered Diana. Ray thought this mighty queer that Diana had not heard from Pal, but as she paused he refrained from

more questions. He saw shadows fill the dark eyes.

"I expect Pal missed the spell of the firs this year, Diana, but will you believe it of me, I am head over heels in love with Bessie."

"Yes," called Marie, "I believe it, and you promised to entertain Viola, too."

"Yes, and I'd like to see the fellow who could get a word in edgewise when your Uncle Carl was around!"

Then Ray said more quietly to Diana, "Do you like Viola as Carl's choice?"

"I expect that is his business whom he marries, but I can't help but wish it were somebody else beside Viola. Of course, I won't have to live with her."

"I should hope not," laughed Ray. "I would go into fits if I had her around me long."

Ray left Diana at his sister's gate, and she called to him, "Don't forget I am still here although Bessie has gone. Come over just the same."

"I'll be around every now and then," he answered. Ray could see that Diana took Pal's parting to heart, and he went on wondering.

As Diana walked on, Old Doctor Smith came up with a horse and buggie, and he called to her, "I guess now that all your guests are

gone, that you will spare a few moments to an old man who has missed your voice for some time."

Diana was soon in by the side of the old doctor—her father's old friend. She was happier as they sped on to think that she was not left alone after all for old friends of that stamp were worth much in this life. Doctor Smith was a true and tried friend.

"Diana, I want to talk over a little business affair with you. You should not bother your young head over such things, but I did not know of any other way now, and I felt your father would like me to go about it in this way. You understand that the last few years of your father's lumbering he had bad luck. The very last year that he lumbered he came to me and borrowed money, and he gave me notes. You also know that the last year he made a fine year—more than he himself had expected. He said he would settle wtih me at once, although the notes were not then due. If he had not been called away from this world he would have done so, but he did not get the matter straightened out. Now the notes will soon run out, and I could not go to your mother, for she must not be worried over business matters. When I went to seek Carl

to-day, they told me he had gone. Now I am getting up in years, and I can't stay in the harness much longer, and I will need the money. Here are the notes and I know, although they did run out, you and Mrs. Sutton would be all right, and yet I am not so sure about Carl. He could blame me for not turning them in before they ran out and that is why I am doing this. Carl is not like your father, Diana, child. You take the notes to Mrs. Sutton and she will advise you. Diana, your mother is failing fast, and she no doubt will make a will and I wanted you all to understand about this before that.

"Dr. Smith, I thank you," said Diana as she saw her father's writing. "I am so glad you did not tell mother of father's embarrassment, and I shall see you receive every cent. I shall look after this at once, Dr. Smith, and you need not even worry over it. I will see it is paid with the interest."

"Bless your heart, Diana, you are just like your father. Your eyes are always reminding me of him—open, frank and true. You need not hurry about the money, little girl. I just wanted it known before they ran out, on Carl's account."

Carl's selfishness had turned old Dr. Smith

against him, and he feared for the girl's future in a home alone with Carl. Little did the old doctor think of what awaited Diana. When they drove up the driveway, Marie called to Dr. Smith and said, "Doctor, Grannie is not well and mamma says for you to please come in."

He stepped out and lifted Diana. "Now, little girl, don't you worry over that money. Any time it suits you to pay it will be all right."

They entered Aunt Dorotha's room to have her say, "Doctor, I have such a queer feeling around my heart."

"Well, well, now—Mrs. Varden—you need rest, that is all, for you have had a houseful of young faces so long. You need quiet and rest, and just this face to keep you company," and the old doctor caught Diana's face between his hands. Aunt Dorotha smiled, as she felt very proud of her beautiful Diana.

When the old doctor passed out in the hall he met Mrs. Sutton, and she came to him and said, "Doctor, will she be with us through the winter?" and tears filled her eyes, she was so like her mother, always gentle and quiet.

"That is a hard question to answer, Mrs. Sutton. She must be kept quiet now, and we

will try and keep her for your little sister's sake," and he turned to the door. Marie, Hettie and Gaynor were on the veranda and, as the old doctor passed out, Hettie went to Aunt Dorotha's room and found her sleeping peacefully. Diana and Mrs. Sutton were looking at her, then Hettie thought of how she did wish she had never gotten the dear old lady to make that will, what it would mean to Diana. Now there was no hopes of her talking with Aunt Dorotha, for the girls would see that she was not left alone now. As Aunt Dorotha slept on, Diana rose and found Gaynor alone on the veranda, as Marie had gone to meet John. Diana and Gaynor rose and walked out beneath the fir trees to watch the sun sink behind the hills. It was truly a wonderful view—as the sun turned to crimson, sending its reflection in the great lake; and for a few moments they sat in silence.

Gaynor thought of the day in the fir nook, and when he thought of Pal his heart filled with sorrow, for he had not fulfilled his promise to Diana. He had told her he would see Pal and tell him and he had not done so. He had tried to see him. He thought of writing to Pal, after he had failed to see him, but no—he could not put that on paper. Pal

would think him a low-down cur. No—he must see Pal, face to face, to tell him that. Then he thought of the girl's loving arms around his neck, and the lips that met his in a long lingering kiss; he could never forget that moment!

Diana watched John and Marie as their canoe drifted far out over the waves, and she was thinking—what would she give to be as free from care and sorrow as they were and as happy! It seemed that the spell of the firs had deserted her much as she loved them. It seemed as if the others of her guests were as free and happy as the great firs that waved above them, but he had left only her dreams! The one man, Pal, now filled her heart completely and she had forgotten the love in her heart for Gaynor that had first wakened the chord in her heart. She did love Cousin Gaynor, she knew that—but yet it was her old friend, Pal, that held the place in her heart, of the one man, and she felt it was only pity that she had held for Cousin Gaynor. As Hettie had been treating him more lovingly she had forgotten his sadness, and her thoughts had been filled with Pal, and how he could ever say what he did about her. Whoever told him such things and why had he be-

lieved them? She loved to be with Cousin Gaynor, but it was just because he understood her, she thought. She had much to thank Cousin Gaynor for; he had wakened in her a love that she knew nothing of before, and yet would it not have been better if she had never known the meaning of the one love, as it had only sprung to life to be cast under foot; it had only been the love of a few weeks and now perhaps over forever.

No, oh, no, she was a richer woman for this love, and it was better to have loved like that but for a day, than never to have known such love. She thought of the arms around her and the kisses raining over her face, and she decided it was worth a lifetime of sorrow, and she could live and dream on even if never again did she feel them in reality.

"Well, Cousin mine," said Gaynor, "it seems the firs have gotten us again, as far as dreams are concerned this evening."

"Yes, Cousin Gaynor, I do really believe the firs cause us to dream, don't you?"

"Perhaps they do," said Gaynor quietly, "and I have had the very happiest dreams of my life here in the Maine woods."

"It is a great wilderness," laughed Diana.

"No it is not a wilderness, Cousin mine. Be-

fore I came here I did expect to find it such, but it is a paradise on earth, and I shall always feel it has made a better man of me, Cousin Diana. The fir trees are a great cure for physical and mental ailments, and I shall return with a new life in my veins, ready for the battle again."

"And, Cousin Gaynor, you won't fail next time, I know you won't," said Diana, looking at him earnestly.

"I will have to begin all over again," said Gaynor slowly, "but I will try and remember what you said, that it is no harm to fail if we rise every time we fall. It will take some time, but I shall try, Cousin mine, to do just what I find best for the people in my next campaign."

The sun set behind the trees and the cool, crisp, woodsy air caused them to turn toward the house. As they rose, Diana said:

"Cousin Gaynor, did you tell Pal it was not true?"

Gaynor's face flushed as he answered: "I did not see Pal before he left, Diana, but I intend to see him and tell him after I return home."

"Now, please don't forget, Cousin Gaynor," she said as they walked back to the house. As she reached the veranda she said, "I will see

if sister is with mother, and if she is, we will get Hettie and take a last canoe ride, and join John and Marie."

She ran lightly up the steps, and found Mrs. Sutton still sitting by her mother, who was still sleeping. She told Hettie her plans, and Hettie said:

"Really, Diana, it is too cold for me to be out to-night; but you and Gordon go, for I know how much he would enjoy it."

Diana stood in the door, as if not intending to go, if Hettie did not accompany her, and Hettie said:

"Do go, Diana, for I want Gordon to have a good evening, that is if you're not too tired."

Diana went out without another word, and soon she and Gaynor were sailing over the moonlit waves. Gaynor was delighted; he had not dared hope to have a farewell sail together, and he was happy. As they were in sight of Marie and John, Gaynor said:

"Diana, just once more sing the song we love." Diana paused at first, then she said: "I will sing you a song that I love," and her voice rang over the waves, "Home, home, sweet home."

As she finished she said in a quiet voice:

"With mother there, there is no place like home."

Then again her voice rang out as she let the canoe drift on toward the pier: "Some day when dreams come true."

Gaynor said slowly: "What was it Professor Vonner was telling you the other night as he left, Diana?"

"He said he hoped some time, when I was alone in the world, that I would think of his offer and come to him. He seemed to think my voice exceptionally fine. It really amused me, when he said when you leave home and find you need a friend, call on me. As if I ever would have to leave the old home." And Diana laughed mirthfully.

Gaynor's heart ached as he thought of what he had heard Smith say about the will.

"Diana, has Aunt Dorotha ever made a will?" he asked.

"No, Cousin Gaynor, and I hope she never will, for I want the home just as it is, always, and we can arrange to do that ourselves when mother is gone. I hope that sister will come and live here then."

They reached the pier, and Diana stepped out, and Gaynor put her canoe away, and she stood with the moonbeams playing over her face.

"Well, Cousin Gaynor, when will you and I have another canoe ride?" she said, as he joined her.

He looked lovingly into her eyes. "In another year, if nothing happens. I have enjoyed this one immensely, and I shall never forget the songs nor the ones who sang them," and he clasped Diana's hand. "Good-by, little cousin," and the tears dimmed his eyes. "May you never be disappointed in the one man of your dreams. May the spell of the firs bring you love, true undying love," and he bent and kissed her brow and they turned toward the home of which Diana had sang.

It was a beautiful morning when Diana awoke and glanced out the window; a white frost covered the trees and ground, and the sun just peeping from behind the trees sent glistening sparks of snow like diamonds.

"Cousin Hettie," cried Diana, as Hettie opened the door, "why you are up early."

"It was such a beautiful morning," said Hettie, coming in and seating herself by the dark haired girl. "I come to thank you, Diana, for teaching me the way, the only way to live right, and I want you to promise to come and visit me in my home and see if I am doing my part."

"I know you will, Cousin Hettie," said Diana kindly. "It was grief that made you bitter with the whole world. Just make up your mind to take what God sends and make the best of it,

and if not on this earth in the next you may be with the one you loved."

"Diana, you don't know how badly I feel over the treatment that you received at my hands, and I will try to repay you some way in the future."

"Cousin Hettie, I have done only my duty. I did not know why you hated me, for I had never wronged you, and so I did not let your dislike interfere in my happiness. Cousin Hettie, try and make Cousin Gaynor happy; he was not happy before, and I know there may be faults on both sides, but, Hettie, give him a chance after this. He won't fail to win your love and respect." As first, as Diana spoke of Gaynor, Hettie let the jealous passion arise, but as Diana went on, she saw how earnest the girl was, and she replied:

"I will try, Diana."

After Hettie and Gaynor were gone, Diana returned to the home and she began arranging for the winter that would soon be upon them.

When Gaynor said good-by to Diana, he saw that look of love and sadness fill the dark eyes. It was just for a moment that he saw the flash, and then it was gone. She laughed and waved them a merry farewell as the train pulled out,

and left her at the station. Mrs. Medford had accompanied them also, and now she turned and went up with Diana to see Aunt Dorotha. Gaynor sat gazing out the windows as the entrancing scene of hill, lakes, rivers, and valleys sped past, and the fir trees, ever the wonderful trees. He felt the cool, soothing and invigorating breeze, as they passed the firs, as the train wound in and out around the bends and curves. Yes, Baylor had been right: Maine could not be described and do it justice. It was little less than heavenly. He and Hettie chatted on like two children as they were nearing their home. This trip had been a Godsend to them.

Diana was busy as the days flew by, preparing for the winter months, and the lumbering.

She talked and planned with the superintendent and foremen for days and days, and at Christmas they were all busy. Still Carl had not returned, and he had been gone over two months now. The care, and worry was telling on Diana. Every letter he would say, 'will be back in another week,' so keep things going. As the wedding drew near, Della, Bessie, and Smith came back to the old home. It had to be just a quiet wedding, as Aunt Dorotha was very low all the time, but she insisted that Marie should be married from the old home. Mr. and Mrs.

Sutton were helping Diana in all the time they could give away from their own home, but still the bulk of the burden fell on Diana. Then Carl said he was going to go at Iola Vandyke's with the Ditson's to spend the holidays. Harry Maxwell arrived and he and Diana with Della and Smith waited on the happy young folks at their wedding. John had received a card from Pal saying he could not come as he was very busy. It was the first word direct from Pal and Diana had taken it to her room and pressed it to her lips. Aunt Dorotha was in better spirits the day of the wedding, and Harry and Diana had carried her to the table, for the wedding supper. It was a beautiful day for a wedding, truly a white world, as the great grain fields were covered with depths and depths of snow, and the lake lay like a mantle in the midst of the fir trees. Mrs. Medford was with them and the happy faced little woman shed rays of sunshine over the home. As twilight was falling, Rev. Hague said the words that made the happy young people man and wife. Marie was charming with her saucy brown curls peeping from beneath her veil, and Bessie had never looked so charming as she did with her orange blossoms.

Little Thelma came in first scattering fir branches along their path, but to Rev. Hague

there was none as beautiful as the pale, dark-haired girl beside Harry Maxwell. Joy and happiness were ringing once more through the old home.

As evening came on and they were seated by the fire, Diana went to the piano and sang for them, the first time for many days. Harry joined her and the sweet voices rang through the great room. First they sang "Just a song at twilight, when the lights are low," then Diana told Harry and the Rev. Hague to join her, and they sang "Silver threads among the gold," and it carried the party back to that night when Diana had sung this old sweet song. The young lovers drew near each other. Aunt Dorotha said as she finished singing.

"That is the only way to live children. Let your love be as strong as the years flow on as it is now at the beginning."

Mrs. Sutton helped Aunt Dorotha to her room later and Diana called the young people to their rooms, and she returned to find Smith and Harry still standing on the veranda and gazing over the great white lake. Smith chatted on for some few moments, and then he went in, leaving Harry and Diana alone.

"Well, Diana, when are you going to follow Marie's and John's example? I expect before

long, as I see the Rev. is still all devotion."

"Oh, no, Harry; I am still in dreamland. Ora said to tell you that she will soon return to New York, and she wants you and me to come on while she is there, and that Mr. Hyde is expecting us. You see, Harry, I can't possibly leave dear old mother when she is so low. Then the lumbering has to be looked after, even if mother were well, and Carl won't be back for another month, he wrote us."

"Diana," said Harry, "I think the spell of the firs got us all last year when here, for whenever I think of little Iola I have a queer feeling around my heart. You can't really call it love, for I do know what that is, Di, but it is a feeling that I want to know more of her, and hear her soft voice again filled with love, for I don't believe I am vain when I say that the love in her voice is meant for me. I lay it to the spell of the firs."

"I expect it is, Harry, and I hope it will never leave you two," and Diana smiled up into his face.

The moonlight fell over her face, and for the first time Harry noticed how pale and thin she had grown, and he blamed Carl for leaving her with all the care on her young shoulders, while he was away spending what this girl was making.

"Diana, why was it Pal did not come for Marie's wedding?" asked Harry.

"I don't know, Harry. I know John thought he would come," and Diana turned away and let her eyes rest out over the great white fields.

"Have you not heard of Pal and his new work, Diana?" asked Harry in a surprised tone of voice.

"No; I have not heard from Pal since he left. I expect he has forgotten all about the friends in Essex by now," and Diana gave a mirthless little laugh.

"I thought at one time, Di, that Pal meant more than just friend to you. The least he could have done would be to have written and thanked you for your kindness while he was here, and tell you of his work. He should know that an old friend like you were to him would be glad of his success."

"Then you have heard from him, Harry?" asked Diana, without looking up.

"Yes, I hear of him through Ora. She tells me that he is staying with Mr. Hyde in their home; that he is now in partnership with Mr. Hyde. Ora says Miss Hyde is very much taken

with Pal, and that he seems quite devoted to her for such a short acquaintance. I feel that Pal should let his old friends hear of his success, for I know I am glad to know he got in with the man that he did. That was through you, Diana. The Hyde family are well known in New York circles. It means much to be there," Harry rattled on, little thinking of what his words meant to the girl who stood silent and cold beside him. He just felt angry at Pal for not writing to his old friend Diana, and so he told her all that Ora had written him. He did not know that the great love that he had begged so for had been spurned by Pal. Yes, the great love he had longed for Pal had thrown away, and nearly broken the heart of the girl. Diana stood silent, her face like the driven snow, and she shivered as Harry told of Miss Hyde. The words cut her to the heart. Harry turned and saw the girl shivering. He said as he placed his arm around her quivering body, "How thoughtless of me, Di. to keep you out here in the cold—but it seemed such a long time since I had a chance to talk with you alone. I am not like Pal, for I think I have sent you a card every week, and I am not half as far away as he is." With his arm still around the slender form they entered the house, and Harry bid her good-night. Diana entered the room quietly and found Aunt Dorotha sleeping

in her room peacefully, so she went out into the large living room and sat down beside the fire. As her eyes fell on the flames, the one man of her dreams played the usual part. Diana thought of Pal, and he with Miss Hyde; so that was the reason that he had not sent her one line. He did not need even her friendship now. Pal had told her he would always love her and she had believed it. She had hoped against hope that he would return at Christmas time, but he did not come and now she understood why. She had told Cousin that she would be happy, though he loved another—she would be happy just because he was—but it was not so easy now! And she bowed her head and wept. In the morning the two young people were starting on their honeymoon, and they were all at the train to see them leave. Marie ran to Diana and said, "If I see Pal what will I tell him for you?"

"Tell him nothing," said Diana, turning away. but Marie made up her mind that if she did see Pal that she would tell him a plenty. She said, "Poor Aunt Di."

John turned as Diana called good luck to them, and he saw her lips quiver, and he said, "We must see Pal," and he kissed Marie as her tears fell for poor Aunt Diana.

CHAPTER XVII.

DIANA'S WORK IN THE GREAT TIMBER

"Gone are the flowers, the sweetest and fairest,
Sleep in the valley now surpliced in white,
Hushed are the woodlands, at winter's stern mandate,
Wild birds have flown to summer heights."

As the train pulled out and left them, Diana said, "This is a beautiful day to start on life's journey; may they always find it as bright." The remaining party turned and walked back 'neath the snow-laden trees. When they caught sight of the home, Diana exclaimed, "There is the foreman from the lumber camp back. What can he come after now, I wonder?" and she followed him out to the stables.

"What is wrong now?" asked Diana, smiling, for she knew that he was back for some urgent cause.

"I have come to tell you, Miss Diana, that we need more men and teams in the camps. The superintendent sent me to tell Mr. Varden so, but I find he has not returned. I am at a loss what to do. The superintendent said he would not put more teams on until he was ordered to.

Mr. Varden limited the number in the fall. He wanted Mr. Varden to come see for himself how many millions he had put in the river. He can not possibly get them yarded before the roads break up with what teams he now has at work. The men will not work overtime, as Carl Varden has forbidden them having extra pay. Miss Diana, something must be done or the lumber will be a complete loss."

Diana listened as he talked, tapping the snow with her dainty shoe toe. As he finished, she still stood in deep thought, then she whirled as if on a pivot, saying, "Wait around here for an hour or so."

The man looked after her as she left, and muttered, "As much like the old man as two peas. I bet she pushes this thing forward before night." Then he mused of what the men had told the superintendent—that they would all quit before they would work an hour overtime for nothing.

When Diana left the foreman she went to the house and ran to her room. She soon came out dressed in a riding habit. She had business in town and had to go; she would have the sleigh sent around for Della and Smith, as Della could not ride. When the sleigh was brought around she and Harry went to the stables. She said:

"You can ride whatever horse you want, Harry. I want Bonnie Bess."

She went to the horse and led her out, and was mounted before Harry even got his saddle on. Harry chose Black Diamond, her father's horse. They was soon cantering over the snowy streets that led to old Lawyer Black, her father's lawyer. She had been looking over her father's papers and books, and she had decided to seek the old lawyer to help her out. Besides, she wanted him to settle with old Dr. Smith, as Carl had not taken interest in the business to care whether they had made a success or failure. She had now come to a point where she needed help, and it was to old Lawyer Black she turned. As she pulled in at the office she told Harry to ride around the square and she would meet him later in the park. When she opened the door to the old lawyer's office he never looked up as he was busily engaged. Diana waited there, and as Mr. Black turned he beheld her; she looked very sweet in her warm riding habit, and she still held her whip in one hand. The old lawyer smiled from beneath heavy brows, and his eyes filled with pleasure.

"Now, little woman, what brings you here—trouble?"

Diana came close to his desk—and explained just what she wanted, and in as few words as possible. Then she dropped back into a chair

and said, "Now, I want your advice. Will it be right for me to go order more teams, and men put on the work when Carl has forbidden it? Will it be right for me to settle with Dr. Smith without waiting for Carl's return? Will it be best for me to go see how many million feet of lumber there is to be put in the river? Then I can find out the average number of feet they haul per day. Then I can tell how much time they have to do it in, and if I see they cannot make it, will I be doing right to put on more teams and raise the wages of the men? And—promising them extra money if they succeed? Will it pay to do this?"

"Well! Well! Girl," broke in Mr. Black, "one question at a time. First, Carl has not returned—and if something is not done at once the money your father made will be lost in this concern. Yes, it is right for you to go see after it, as you say. It would serve Carl right if it did all go under, but it might mean more to you, child, so you go ahead and do what you think best. Certainly it is right for you to pay Dr. Smith, and it is just, and again if you did not pay now, why it will come out of the estate at your mother's death, and Carl should know that. Yes, little girl, you have it all down right and you can get the millions out alright. Trust Diana for that.

Even if you raise the men's wages to double what they are getting now, it would be better for all of you—for it is better to just come out even than to lose what you have put in it. When your mother makes her will, I will see that she deals kindly with you, little girl."

"Oh, Mr. Black, I don't care for money—just all I want is the old home free from debt, and I know we can make it alright," but as Diana said this little did she think that even the old home would be taken from her. If she did not get the millions of logs out, that she and Mrs. Sutton would be almost penniless. Diana left Mr. Black's office in a better frame of mind, and with a lighter heart, and as she joined Harry her plans were all laid out. Harry saw her coming and hastened to meet her, and exclaimed,

"Gee, Di, but you do look sweet."

She laughed cheerfully, as she joined Harry, and said:

"Harry, I am going to ask you something, and I hope you will say yes to what I am going to say."

"Is this leap year?" asked Harry, in a teasing voice.

"I think not," said Diana, "so, old man, you won't have the chance to say no. Harry, I want to get a party ready to go up to the lumber

camps by tomorrow morning, and I want you, Della Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Medford and the Rev. Hague to all go with me. I can get sister to stay and care for mother. We can make it a business and pleasure trip combined. Now, what do you say?"

"I say Hurrah," said Harry; "we should have thought of it before and taken the young married folks up to spend their honeymoon under the spell of the firs. Think of it! A trip back under the snow-laden firs, Diana; you are a gem, indeed you are," and they turned to Smith and Della coming behind them. The sleigh bells seemed to send a joyful feeling through the horses and they could hardly hold them in until Della and Smith joined them, then Diana told them her plans, and they, too, were delighted.

The foreman was waiting for Diana, and he saw them coming. As Diana reached the stables she turned and waved her hat to Harry. Diana liked anything like this, and her eyes sparkled.

"Glad to see you, Mr. Maxwell," said the foreman, as he recognized Harry. "You and Black Diamond seem to be too slow, sir."

"I wonder if that really is the meaning of it," said Harry, laughing, and under the words there was a hidden meaning. Diana soon came quickly to the foreman's side and said, "You go back to the camps, and tell the superintendent to prepare

the camps for company. I will be there tomorrow and my guests will be with me—say, about a dozen people. Tell him that then I will make arrangements for getting out the logs."

The foreman took off his hat as he stood before the girl. He said:

"If it is left in your hands, we can get the logs out, for the men will understand that you will see how they are placed, and they will try then," and he left at once for the deep timber.

Diana then went to the 'phone and called up the others who were to accompany her on this trip—and after that she went to her father's study, and it was long after midnight before she left the papers and books, that she was studying over. Early in the morning Diana could be seen gathering up the fir robes and rugs, and arranging the sleigh for their trip. As the man came up with the mail she paused in her work, and taking the mail, went to her mother's room, and together they opened the packages and letters. There was a package for her from Cousin Gaynor; it was a beautiful painting, and she knew he had it painted for her. There was a great camp fire, and a girl gazing into the fire, and underneath he had written, "Dreaming of the one man." Then another picture opposite was a heavenly scene, and there was a man and a

woman appearings as angels, and they were standing, lovingly together. Under this Gaynor had written, "Some day when dreams come true." Diana's eyes filled with tears as they rested on this picture. She carried them to her room, and then she opened a package from New York, and as she looked at the writing she thought it looked familiar, but, oh, no, Pal could never write like that. When the paper fell from around it she paused in astonishment and joy, for she was now looking into the eyes of Pal. Yes, dear old Pal, and he had remembered her. He was wonderfully improved—this Pal—yet there was a sadness in the eyes never seen there before. She gazed at him and noticed every single improvement in his appearance. Yes, Pal would succeed—she always knew that. Then it flashed before her what Harry had said of Pal and Miss Hyde, and the tears fell as she placed Pal's picture on the dresser. Then she sought in vain for just one tiny word. Well, at any rate, he had not forgotten her, and it was with a smile and a song on hr lips that she joined the others. They were soon ready for their trip, wrapped in warm fur coats, and with the horses covered with bells, all anxious for the start over the beautiful snow. She went to her mother and kissed the aged lips, and then ran out to the sleigh, like

the Diana of old. It was a glorious day, and the cold, crisp air sent the blood coursing through their veins; the frost-laden trees shown like precious gems; the little birds flew hither and thither, sending showers of frost to the ground and it sparkled like diamonds as it fell. The horses seemed in better spirits, too, and the bells rang clear on the morning air. Diana drove in for Mrs. Medford and her family. Thelma ran to the door, calling, "Here they come, here they come!"

"Hurrah, Hurrah," cried Fred, and Mrs. Medford met with smiling face, Mrs. Medford's sister, Miss Brewer, and with the children and Mr. Medford. They had a jolly party. Miss Brewer, like her sister, was a charming little woman, but not at all beautiful. Rev. Hague met them, as he was on his way to join them at Mrs. Medford's. As they turned out into the wood road, outside of town. Thelma cried out in delight as the horses sent snow flying back into the sleigh.

"The horses are snowballing us, Mamma," she cried."

Smith and Della were carried away with the beauty of a Tote-road in the winter time: the fir trees waved above them and the V-shaped track of the timid deer ran beside the road, little birds flying from branch to branch, singing

gleefully. Yes, they were coming into the tall timbers now and the balsam filled their nostrils, and they were all warm and happy. Diana said:

"Now, we are to come out above the rapids and drive up the ice—then we enter the tall timbers again."

"It is possible this is where we were last fall?" said Smith.

"Yes, the same place," said Diana as they came out on the river, and she sent the horses flying over the ice. Harry sang in a baritone voice, "Riding in a sleigh," and the rest joined in the chorus. When they closed Mr. Medford clapped his hands and said:

"What would we do without Diana—to plan trips for us all! She knows how to cheer lonely hearts—and bring life to our old bodies. Now, tell me, who would ever thought of this trip but her?"

"Well said," answered Harry, "see what the honeymoon folks are missing."

It was just getting dark as they drove in at the camps; they were all hungry now. The superintendent and foreman were waiting for them and hastened to meet them. Diana shook hands with the men, as if they were old friends, and then introduced her party to them. The foreman led the team away while the superintendent

showed them to a cabin. It was made of rough logs, and yet as the door swung open there was a great cheerful fire. They at once gathered around it, as it had been a cold frosty drive, and yet they had not noticed the cold until they met the warmth from the fire. Diana said:

"Now, you all get fixed comfortable. I am going to find the cook the first thing, for I feel as if I could eat everything in the camp," and she ran out to the camp, set aside for a cooking room and dining room combined. As she opened the door she cried, "My, but I am hungry; where is the cook?" Three or four men were busy over a great table that ran clear from one end of the camp to the other.

"I am the cook," answered one of the men in a low voice and awkwardly, as if he expected the girl to be only a vision that would soon disappear to realms above.

"Well, how are you, good fellows," said Diana, as she held out her hand. Then she went to the others and gave each of them a hearty handclasp. "I am Diana Varden, and I am nearly starved, and my guests are, too. This does all look tempting," and she looked at the table laden down with the coarse woods food. "Good old gingerbread, too! Say, when are we going to eat?"

The men had stood like bashful children.

"Oh, I forgot—a Merry Christmas to you all!"

The men all bowed to her, and the cook said:

"When you are ready to eat your supper, it will be waiting." Diana fairly flew back to tell the others. The men stood as she had left them.

"Gee whiz, is that Carl Varden's sister?" said one to the other.

"Darned if I know," answered the cook. "She don't look much like him, or act like him, either."

It was not until they heard the merry voices at the door that they moved to work once more.

"Here we are!" cried Diana, and she seated each one at the table and helped to wait on them before she sat down herself. No, this could never be Carl Varden's sister; they were rich, and she would never do like this.

"I expect you fellows won't have much left," said Harry, "for the men when they come in tonight."

"Help yourself," answered the cook, "we were prepared for Miss Varden and her guests."

The party was happy as they passed out, one by one, to their cabin. The homely woods-fare tasted far better than any hotel fare would tonight. As it grew late and darkness came on, Diana saw the tired men from the deep timbers filing in. Then she went into the superitendent's

camp and told him that she had the management all in her hands now. She handed him a note from Lawyer Black to that effect, saying that whatever Diana Varden did in the lumbering business would be alright with the Varden firm. The superintendent and Diana went to the camp where the men were gathered, and the superintendent said:

"Here is a note from Lawyer Black, stating that we are to have a new manager. Let me introduce her to you—Miss Varden."

The men gazed in astonishment at the girl as she smiled and came to each one and shook hands with him. They could not believe she knew anything of the great timber. The older men Diana had known before, and they knew that she did understand, for they had watched her as she trudged after her father through the deep snow, on snow-shoes, following in her father's tracks. They felt that she was capable of managing the work all right, and they saw her eyes flash with excitement under the camp light.

"I want to do what is right by you, and I want you to do what is right by me. I want you to help me manage, for I must get every log into the river."

Smith and Harry followed Diana out to see what she could be up to now, and they stood

by the window as she was talking to the men. They could see she was very much in earnest as she talked. Mrs. Medford, Della and the others went out to see where the rest of thir party had gone to, and they found them standing by the window, watching Diana, and they, too, drew near just as Diana was shaking the hands of the rough woodsmen. Della said in a whisper:

"How can Diana ever touch these rough-looking men. They make me shudder, with their unshaven faces, and their torn, coarse, woods-clothes; they look almost inhuman."

But Diana could see that, under the rough ways and clothes that there were honest hearts beating beneath, and she was true in her words to them. She wanted them to help her and she knew they were men of honest, sturdy hearts, and that they would do so, if they were treated like they were men. When the crowd turned from the window Smith said:

"Diana is the most remarkable girl I ever saw. She has won the respect of every man in that camp tonight by her straightforward manner. I wonder what this all means; she must be having some trouble with the men in the lumbering. I say, where can you find another girl Diana's age that can overlook the rough rude ways and find the goodness of character at the bottom. I tell

you she has touched the hearts of those fellows, who were fast growing bitter to the whole world because they received no praise even for the work they have been doing. Boys, I tell you, a lumberman's life is pretty tough. When you think of him being shut up here a good part of the year, with no wife or baby to cheer him after a hard day's work. Then the young men who, no doubt, have a sweetheart back in the settlement, to stay up here for months without seeing a woman's face, by George, I say, Diana is right—they need the encouragement."

"I bet Diana has awakened in their hearts a glimmer of the home-coming," said Mr. Medford; "may God bless her."

Diana started for the door, then she turned and said: "A Merry Christmas to you all, and hopes of many brighter ones." She ran back to camp to find her party gathered around the fire, and they chatted until bedtime, and they then turned to the beds of fir. Mrs. Medford and Fred stayed in the camp with the ladies to keep the fire up through the night, and the others went to the superintendent's camp. They were soon sleeping on the fire berths and dreamed happy dreams under the spell of the firs. Diana was awake at 4 o'clock the following day and she quietly left the cabin and ran to the cook's camp, and gave

him a surprise. He was packing the buckets for the men, who would be too far away to come to their dinner at the noon hour.

"Good morning," Diana called, as she entered. "You see, I want to go out to the yards with the teams and I was afraid they would leave me."

The cook wondered what that girl would be doing next, but she was a better manager than Carl already, for he always lay in bed until nearly noon, whenever he did come into the camp. Diana went out and found a pair of snowshoes and fitted them to her feet, and when the teams were ready she had Bonnie Bess ready to follow them to the yards. The men stood aghast as the girl told them that she was going out with them. She had a small book in her pocket and when they reached the landing she tied up Bonnie Bess and she went over the great piles of logs, and counted them carefully, and it was after 10 o'clock when she returned to camp and found the others looking for her. They were just wondering where she could be when she rode into the camp yard. She was merry and full of life. The men watched Diana as she mounted Bonnie Bess, and followed them out into the woods, and they then saw her tie the horse to a tree and put the snowshoes on her feet and walk off like an old woodshand. They saw as she stopped at every

pile of logs and counted, then take a small book out of her pocket and write. The day passed more quickly as they talked of old man Varden's daughter. At camp the party explored the lumber roads, and this lumbering business was all new to them. One morning Smith and Harry rose early and decided they would find out where Diana went every morning. They followed closely behind the teams, and then they saw Diana tie Bonnie Bess to a tree and put the snowshoes on her feet an dstart off in the deep timber. Harry and Smith had neither one ever tried the snowshoes, but the cook advised them it would be best for them to take them along. They decided they would try them now, so they undertook to follow Diana over the snow. It looked like an easy thing—as they saw her walk away, but such a time as they had! Smith stepped on the tail of Harry's snowshoe and over and over they both went in the deep snow. Then they gave it up and pretty soon they saw Diana coming. She went to her horse and mounted, and then she saw them. She was surprised to see them out so early, and when they told her of their attempt to follow her on snowshoes, she laughed merrily. Then she said: "Well, you can mount and follow me now, if you wish."

All day Diana spent with the superintendent

and foreman, and she gave the order for more teams at once and told the superintendent to raise the wages of each man, and told him to push the work for all that was in him and put on the extra help at once. That night the superintendent called all the men into his office, and told them of their new wage. Then Diana came in and she told them she trusted them to do the very best they could for her, "for you know," she had said, "my reputation as a lumbering hand is also at stake now," and the men left her with a feeling that they would do their best to put every log in the river before the breaking up of the roads.

Among the men she found many of the Catholic faith, and she made up her mind she would tell Father Brooks of the men and see if he could spare some time each month with them at the camp. It would mean so much to the men who were so much alone. Diana asked that all the men would join them in the dining camp that night, as it would be their last night at camp. Then she went to her guests and got each one to promise to help entertain the men that night. When they all gathered in the camp Diana began by telling the men how much they had all enjoyed their trip, and they thanked them all for their kindness. They sang many

songs, told stories and then Rev. Hague talked with the men and told them that although they were far from their loved ones that the same God was with them in the great timber that was with their loved ones at home. If they were ever in doubt to take a lesson from the things of the forest; that every tiny bird was fed from the gracious hand. Then they all knelt on the rough log floor and thanked God for his many mercies, and he prayed that God would watch over the homes of all the men, and to make their home-coming a blessing, then as they rose they sang the song, "That Old Sweet Story, When Jesus Was Here Among Men," and as the voices rang on, the men of the deep timber joined in and sang. Then Rev. Hague said "Amen," and they bid the men a cheery good-night, and went to the cabin and were soon in dreamland.

Early the next morning Diana's guests were awakened by a yell that made the old forest ring. They rose and there were the men standing waving their hats and cheering for the new boss, old man Varden's daughter. Diana went to the door and waved her hand to them, as the teams turned towards the woods, and the men filed after them, one by one. That morning the superintendent came to Diana and said:

"Miss Varden, I believe the day is saved. I

believe we can get the lumber out without ~~not~~ so many more teams, after all. I felt the men could do more if they would try, but after Mr. Carl gave them the cut in wages they did not take any interest at all, but I believe they will try now."

"But don't leave a log in the woods on account of shortage of help," said Diana. "We must make a success of this now, as I don't want that brother of mine to say, 'I told you so,'" and Diana laughed and went to the cook's camp. "I wonder if you have breakfast waiting on us," she said.

"No, it is not quite ready yet, but I will soon have it on the table," answered the cook.

"What time do you have to get up in the morning?" she asked the cook.

"I am usually up before 4," said the cook.

"I see," said Diana, "and now I am going to send more men in here for you to cook for, and I expect I better send you some more help. I'll just let you do that yourself. Engage a good man or two as assistant, for you only have two now, and I want the men's camps kept good and warm when they come in at night, tired and hungry. I want you to have help enough to keep their cabins clean, and always have a good fire in the cabins, for, after working in the deep snow they are wet and cold. You see after that, and

always have their meals on time and I will add another ten-spot to your wage. Understand, all this must be done for the men, for I have a great deal at stake, and I know men can't work under such bad conditions as have been here in the past, and I want it made so they will feel like doing their duty." Then Diana turned to the superintendent, who entered, and said: 'I want you to see that the cook does his part, too, and I have made arrangements for him to get more help."

The cook has stood as if stunned as the girl rattled on. He had thought that she had come to give them another cut, as Carl had done, and it nearly took his breath when she promised him more help, but when she said in her matter-of-fact way that she was going to raise his wages, it did not seem as if it could be true. After breakfast the party left the camp. When Diana took up the lines the horses were dancing and prancing, ready for the start. She waved her whip in farewell as the men stood and watched her drive away. The superintendent turned to the men and said: "If we don't get that lumber in the river before April, we are lowdown curs. That girl has more brains in a moment than that brother would show in years. She is the old man over again, and we must work, early and late, to show

her we appreciate her trust in us. If the logs are not all in the river by the time the warm spell comes, I will never call myself a woodsman again."

That night when the men filed in, tired and hungry, they were surprised to find a cheery fire in their cabin and the savory smell of the supper greeted their nostrils as they entered the yard, and they knew that they would not have to wait long for a chance to gratify their appetites. It was all a comfort that was not known in the lumber camps before; the men had hauled one extra load that day, and had their teams all loaded up for the morning start, which went to prove that a little kindness radiates a glow of hope, not soon dimmed. Little Thelma clapped her hands in glee as the horses turned out on the river—where the great logs were piled, and the wood's teams were unloading more. As the party moved among the piles of logs, Harry said: "The men earn all they ever get in a lumber woods, don't they?"

"I am glad I came up here," said Smith, "I have learned something."

"I have, too," said Mr. Medford, "I have learned how to run a lumber camp, or any other business successfully.

"How is it, brother?" asked little Miss Brewer.

"I would treat the workers as fellow-workmen and friends. "Yes, I am learning," and Mr. Medford's eyes fell on Diana, who was lost in thought, at what a great loss it would have been if they had not gone up to the camp. Yes—they had put everything into this lumber concern this year—and Carl was quickly spending all the farm had brought them. Mr. Medford nodded his head toward Diana, saying, "She can teach us all something if we only watch her."

"I believe you," said Smith, and he gazed in admiration at the bowed head of Diana, as she thought of how near she had come to losing the old home. But she felt sure that the men would get the logs out in the river before the April storms came to melt the snow.

After Pal left Diana and Essex he determined to forget Diana, and he put his mind on the work that Mr. Hyde placed before him, and he studied evenings. Mr. Hyde was delighted at the progress of the boy, and his ability to understand his business. Then he confided to Pal the progress of the mines he had in the West. He wanted Pal to learn the mining system and he would let him go in as partner, on the gold mine proposition. As the weeks grew into months he took Pal into partnership with him, and he then invited Pal to make his home with him and

his sister. Pal was now installed in the Hyde mansion. Miss Hyde was much younger than her brother, and a jolly good-hearted girl, and belonged to the four hundred class of society. She was a very sensible and dignified young lady, she was below the medium height, and had soft blue eyes, and brown hair of a golden hue; she was plump and well built, and enjoyed all outdoor sports. At first Pal stood in awe of this mistress of millions and he dreaded to dine with the rougish eyes of Etter Hyde on him, for she had a way of looking at him as if it amused her. Pal could not stand to be ridiculed. Etter Hyde did not mean to make Pal feel cold towards her. It was after Etter met Pal in her brother's office that she said to her brother:

"Why don't you ask Mr. Duncan to come and stay with you here at the house," and it surprised her brother, as she had refused to have Mr. Hoome in their home. She had taken a fancy to this Maine boy. As the days passed on and Etter Hyde was always ready for any ~~otuing~~ that Pal mentioned. He grew to look forward to the evenings spent at Mr. Hyde's home. He had studied how to keep Diana out of his thoughts, but, try as he would, her face would always come before him; at work or at play he would see her standing beneath the apple trees

crying, as he had left her. Then again he would see her in Gaynor's arms; he would see her clasping Gaynor's neck, and then he would toss and tumble all night and get up feeling still tired. Since he had been at Mr. Hyde's home he had not thought of Diana so much, and he began to believe that he could really forget her in time. She could cling to Gaynor if she wished. As weeks passed by he heard no news from Essex, then John's letter came begging him to come to the wedding. Then for the first time in many days he thought of Diana, and he fancied he could see her standing beneath the trees weeping. Yes, he would enjoy going back to Essex again, and just clasp the girl to him and have her put her arms around his neck. Then the picture of she and Gaynor came before him again, and he said, with a moan, "No, No; I can never go back to John's wedding. But I will write and ask them to come down and stop here with me for a few days. Then he went to his room and wrote John to that effect. That evening he accompanied Mr. Hyde and his sister to hear Ora sing at Mr. Vonner's musicale. After the theatre, Ora joined them, and she could not believe this was the same Pal, who a few months ago was in the Maine woods with them. She wondered at him as he laughed and chatted

with Miss Hyde as easily as if he were always accustomed to being in the society of New Yorkers. When at home, he would shun even his boyhood friends, and his face would flush if any lady besides Diana would speak to him. What a change had come over Pal. She asked him if he liked New York, and he answered, sincerely: "Better than I ever expected to like any place except Maine."

"But there is no place like Maine after all, I am thinking."

"That is what I tell Etta," laughed Mr. Hyde. "I intend for her to spend one vacation with me in the Maine Woods, that is, if Miss Varden will accompany us."

"Indeed, it would not mean much to any of us without Diana," said Ora.

"When I think of Maine without her, why it would be just like any other place."

Pal listened and said never a word. Miss Hyde said gleefully, "I am just wild to meet Miss Varden, for brother tells me that no words can describe her goodness and beauty. I know I shall like her if she is one-half what brother has told me, and I understand she is to be very wealthy at her mother's death."

"Mr. Maxwell said she would not care for wealth without her mother, but I believe he is

mistaken there, for I never met a woman yet who could not enjoy wealth."

"I am of Mr. Maxwell's opinion," said Mr. Hyde. "Without her mother Diana would never even think of money. Now she is interested in making money for the care of her mother—as if she need worry over wealth. She is always busy looking after the progress of the crops, and the home. Yet she always has time to make her guests happy. She is remarkable, Etta, in both form and character. I cannot express the grandeur and sweetness of it. I will never forget the night we were canoeing, you remember, Ora? She sang for us. I cannot describe the music, or what it meant to me. I do not wonder at Vonner being carried away with that voice."

As Hyde talked Pal was silent, but he thought of his old friend, Diana. Where in all the world would you find another like her, and she was his at one time, and he had left her of his own free will—this girl Hyde was raving over. He had loved her—he still loved her; yes, his love was true, yet he was trying to forget her, but it was useless. As Hyde spoke, the old love surged up again. He would send Diana his photograph and see if she would answer by one little word. He doubted if she would, for they had quar-

reled and he had hurt the heart of this girl. Why? And then the vision of her and Gaynor flashed before him. He shook himself to hear Miss Hyde saying, "It is a wonder somebody don't run away with this girl, or that she does not get married. If she were in New York with that voice, let along the beauty, she would not remain Miss Varden long, I'm thinking."

"I know that she would, though," said Ora, "for I know of a great many offers of marriage she has had and refused. She said the last time I saw her that she was just going to dream on and on, and in her last letter she said she was still gazing in the fire and dreaming of the one man of her dreams. I know she told us one night in camp that she had an ideal man, but he was in her dreams. I do know that brother of mine is simply wild over her, and she has refused him for one, and the Rev. Hague for another, and I know if Diana were in the farthest ends of the earth, it would be the very same, for I shall always believe she has cast her love on someone who has not come up to the ideal of her dreams."

"I do think it is a shame for a girl like Diana to have her love wasted on the fire and her dreams. I do know if Diana did not love anyone she would never marry; she would prefer

to live alone forever," Mr. Hyde said slowly, as if he were worried.

"And Harry Maxwell was refused. Well, Diana is a queer girl all right, but I am an ardent admirer of her's even yet."

Pal caught his lips between his teeth as they talked on. This was the first time he ever had thought of Harry Maxwell being a lover of Diana's. She was a queer girl to refuse this man, for Harry was what everybody considered a great catch. Pal knew well enough why Diana had refused Harry; it was because she loved another man, and she had said that other man was himself. But why, if she loved him, as she said she did, could she allow Gaynor to caress her? Well, perhaps he had not come up to Diana's ideals, as Ora had just said, and she had turned to Gaynor. She had told him beneath the apple trees that he was the man of her dreams, and little Thelma had said so, too. No, Ora and Hyde did not know what he did about Diana and Gaynor, or they would not hint at blaming hi mas they did, for, trying to forget her, and forget her he would. They all chatted merrily on until they reached Mr. Hyde's home, and Ora felt angry, and hurt over the way Pal had treated Diana, as she saw how attentive he had become to Miss Hyde, and not one word of

praise or kindness did he have for the girl, whom Ora felt, loved him.

When Harry returned from Aunt Dorotha's, he sat down and wrote Ora a full account of the wedding, and thier trip to the camp. He told of Carl's absence, and then he wrote long and lovingly of Aunt Dorotha's illness, and said Diana had changed, too. "She is thin and careworn looking. I don't see what Carl can be thinking of to leave her like that, with all the care on her shoulders, but, Ora, Diana is the same kind, loving creature that I have always loved. Diana can't come with me now, but I am going to visit the Vandykes in the coming months, and will stop in New York for some time with you. Marie and John were called home on account of Mrs. Varden's illness; they sent urgent messages for Carl, so John tells me, but so far he has not come. I am afraid if Diana loses the mother and the old home, too, that we will lose her. What a curse that Hettie was to Diana, but may God watch over dear Diana.

"Ora, I wish to God that I had been the one man of her dreams, but I guess I was too slow."

As Ora finished reading her face grew set and white. "Oh, how I do wish that Harry had been Diana's choice." Since she had been here at Mr. Hyde's she knew that Pal held a place in

sweet little Etta's heart, and it seemed that Pal had really forgotten Diana. She still sat thinking of Diana and all her kindness to Pal, when he walked in.

"News from home, Ora?" asked Pal as he moved towards his room.

"Yes, Pal, from Harry. He has written news, and, to me, sad news; take it along and read it at your leisure."

Pal tucked the letter in his pocket and went to his room. When Pal reached his room he threw himself in a chair and opened the letter. He read it over and over again. Poor Diana; what a cur Carl was to leave her to manage like that. Then as he read what Harry said about him his face flushed to crimson. Yes, they all blamed him, and God knew he had loved Diana truly; how could Diana think he could believe anything else, when he had seen with his own eyes, and what hurt the most of all was she lied to him about it. He had asked her to explain and she had said: "Pal, don't ever mention Cousin Gaynor to me again or we won't even part as friends."

Well, Diana did not believe in divorce, and so he knew Diana would never marry Gaynor, and as Ora said, she no doubt would go on loving the one man until the end, in dreams only. But

how could Diana love him alone, as she said, when she had been pressed in Gaynor's arms, and her lips had been clinging to his. Oh! how could Diana lead him on to love her, and then use his love for a sham for that man Gaynor? No, he and Diana could never be even friends again, for he could not forget how she had lead him on to shield Gaynor. He felt that Miss Hyde cared for him as more than friend of late, and yet always when he tried to speak to her of a future, Diana's face would come to him, and her voice, crying, "Pal, I love you more than anything on earth," and he could not forget her, try as he would.

Now, whatever did Harry mean about Diana losing her mother, as well as the old home, too. Of course, Mrs. Varden had made no will, and Diana would always own the old home, and Mrs. Sutton would not listen to dividing the old home, even if Carl did want it done. But what did Harry mean? Yes, if Diana did have to leave the old home, it would mean a great shock to her and one from which she would not recover soon. But, of course, that could never be. He could not picture the old home without Diana there. She had always been there and she belonged in the home. Harry said she did not seem the same girl. Why?

He remembered how at his own mother's illness that Diana had left her guests and comforted him and his father. He could see her now as she dashed across the orchard, with her glossie black hair flying in the breeze, with flushed cheeks and dark eyes filled with sympathy and love. She had never sent him one word in answer to the photo, that he had sent her Christmas. Harry said that she had received it. Well, anyway, he must write her a few lines of sympathy for her mother's illness, but he would write as only a friend.

As the days passed on, Mrs. Varden sank into a state of unconsciousness, and one night Dr. Smith told Diana and Mrs. Sutton that the gentle mother would not be with them any longer. Mrs. Sutton's eyes filled with tears at the thought of the little mother being on her way to the last journey, but Diana turned to the window and a set cold stare came into her eyes, a look that Dr. Smith hated to see there. Then she went to her mother's room and went to Marie and John's side and sent them to Mrs. Sutton. She clasped her mother's hand—the mother that was the dearest of anything else on earth. As Dr. Smith came to the door she raised her eyes to his face, and they had a look of a wounded spirit in them, but cold and dry. The old doctor

passed out and wiped the tears from his eyes. Diana sat by her mother all night, and she never shed a tear, but administered tenderly to every want of the loved one. Dainty Marie's heart was nearly broken and she wept nearly all the night away. Mrs. Sutton sat by Diana and was weeping quietly, as they watched the breath grow shorter and shorter, then as the death angel came Aunt Dorotha opened her eyes and said, "Where is Carl?" It was only a whisper, "Coming," answered Diana gently, although she knew, too late, to cheer the mother who called and longed for him, and her heart grew very bitter toward Carl. Aunt Dorotha reached her hand to Mrs. Sutton, who clasped it tenderly. She asked, "What is it mother?"

"You and Carl watch and care for our Diana," she answered. Then she pulled Diana toward her and as she looked up and smiled into Diana's eyes, she left this world of sorrow. Gone—gone from them forever—and Carl had never come. Dr. Smith had come in and stood in the door. As he saw the kind but tired eyes close forever he came forward and led Diana and Mrs. Sutton away, and then returned and sent a message for Carl. Diana went to her room and sat by the window, numb and cold, and she could hardly realize that the gentle little mother had gone

forever. What did life mean to her now? Her eyes then fell on Pal's photo. She gazed long and lovingly on the face of the other loved one who held a place in her heart . Fate seemed cruel to this girl; she had lost the two that she loved best. What did life mean, anyway, to her now? She sat there and soon heard Maria sob out in the hall below, "Grannie, oh Grannie!" Diana sat as if stupefied; she wanted to cry out as Marie had done, but she left helpless, and alone. Marie's grief was nothing compared to her's; she still sat by the window, as the day had once more come to a close. She sat, wild-eyed and sad, as darkness crept on. She went down to the library, where her mother lay in folds of snowy white. She entered and closed the door and knelt by the loved one. She did not know how long she had knelt there gazing into the sweet and smiling face, as she had smiled her last on Diana. She looked very peaceful and happy. It was only with the opening of the door that she raised her eyes, and Harry Maxwell entered and came towards her. He came and knelt by her side and great sobs of grief shook his frame, for he had always loved the gentle old lady with a pure love such as he had loved his own mother. Diana never wept, but moan after moan escaped her lips as she walked to the window,

and gazed into the darkness. Doctor Smith stayed at the home all day, and it cut him to the heart to see Diana so silent in her grief. If she had wept tears like Mrs. Sutton he would not worry over her—but her's was a stony grief which brought harm to the girl. Near morning he walked to the library and heard a man weeping and opened the door, thinking Carl had come. But he found Harry Maxwell kneeling by the casket, while Diana stood by the window, cold and silent as the mother who lay near. The old doctor went to Harry and begged him to take Diana out. Harry wiped his eyes and said tenderly, "Come, Diana, come with me." She gazed into Harry's face as if not understanding. Dr. Smith stood as if rooted to the spot as he gazed into the girl's wild-weary eyes, then footsteps came up the hall and Carl burst into the room crying, "Oh, Mother!" Hettie and Gaynor followed close behind him. Carl spoke to his dark-eyed sister saying, "Diana, why didn't you tell me how she really was." Dr. Smith felt like cursing the man, for had not Diana sent message after message to Carl. He turned and went to his mother's side, sobbing. Diana still stood as if in a dream. Hettie and Gaynor spoke kindly to her, and Dr Smith called Hettie aside and told her that he feared for Diana's reason if they

did not wake her out of this stupor. Gaynor went hastily to Diana's side, saying: "Come, Cousin, let's get out into the fresh air." He took her arm gently As he touched her she fell back and Harry caught her, and he and Gaynor carried her to her room. Carl said, "I should think she would faint after letting me remain in ignorance of how low mother was."

Dr. Smith lay his hand on Carl's shoulder roughly and said: "Carl Varden, not another word regarding that. John sent you message after message and so did Diana, and I happen to know that you received them by this," and he held up a letter that Carl had written. It said: "I have received the message and will come the following week." "Time and death wait on no man," said Dr. Smith; "that sister of yours is in a fair way to follow your mother." Then Dr. Smith followed Harry and Gaynor, to Diana's room. Mrs. Sutton came hurriedly up the stairs, as Harry had called her on the way. She looked at the beautiful pale face of her sister and burst out in fresh tears. Harry and Gaynor went downstairs and Carl and Hettie soon joined them. Daylight crept in at the windows as they went to their rooms to rest. Diana lay in a stupor all through the day, and for days following. As her mother was put to rest in the quiet churchyard by her

father, Diana lay, all unconscious of the loss of the gentle mother. Mrs. Medford and Bessie watched over her while Marie and Mrs. Sutton attended the funeral. It was after Hettie and Gaynor had waited for weeks to see a change in Diana, that the nurse called Dr. Smith and Mrs. Sutton, and told them that the change was near. At noon Diana began to realize her loss and burst forth into bitter tears. Dr. Smith then went to the others and told them that now he had hopes of Diana's recovery. As Gaynor and Hettie were ready to start they bent to kiss the weary, tired eyes and lips. After the others had passed out Gaynor pressed Diana to his breast and then followed Hettie with a heavy heart. It was late in the spring when Diana was able to get around the old home again, and it was not the light-hearted Diana of old. Marie was as blithe as a bird at having her beloved aunt around once more. Mrs. Sutton's face wreathed in smiles as she came in on the vine-covered veranda to see Diana sitting there, gazing out over the lake. While they were all busy talking, old Lawyer Black came up the walk. As he saw Diana his aged eyes lighted, and he rushed up the steps like a boy and clasped the girl's hands. He said: "I bring you fine news, little girl. The superintendent of the lumber camps came to me last

month and said that they had gotten all the logs to the mill and that the company was only waiting until the manager was able to come for the money now. He came to me as the family attorney. He said if you were not able to go settle that he would just leave it in my hands, and so I settled the business for you, and I find there is $5,000 clear—made on your lumbering concern. Now, how is that for a girl in the lumber business. Hey? I waited until I could come to you, for you were the one who did the work and I thought it was only just and right. I have placed it with the other money that was in the bank. You know, after I payed Dr. Smith the money due on the notes, it left only $3,000 then in the bank with what Carl has put to use on his trip. I want this all straight before I resign from your father's trust. I am getting along in years, and I want you young people satisfied with my work as your father's attorney. Where is your brother?"

"Here I am," answered Carl, who had stood unobserved in the door as Lawyer Black explained all about the lumber and Dr. Smith's notes. "What was it you were saying about my father's notes?"

Then Lawyer Black explained how he had advised Diana to settle the affair. "As you were not here to look after the business, Mrs. Sutton

and I decided Diana had best attend that, along with the other work she had to look after. Dr. Smith had already waited two years for what your father had told him he would pay him as soon as he got the lumber out. Young man, you should have been here at the failing point of the lumber business this winter."

Carl stood silent, and Lawyer Black rattled on:

"Your sister made $5,000 clear, while if, like you, she had let it go to the wind and trot around the country, you all would have lost twice that much."

"Yes, that is just like the lumber jacks. The minute my back was turned they just stood still. The men are thieves, that is what they are. I shall see the superintendent, and he won't stand up and tell them lies to me, that they could not have gotten that lumber out without more teams and men."

"Carl, oh, Carl, how can you!" cried Diana excitedly. "The superintendent did the very best he could for us and those lumbermen are honest men. You must remember that if it had not been for them we would have lost all that father ever made. You must remember that they are human and our brothers in the sight of God. They did not have any comforts whatever in that camp. I was disgusted when I saw

how they had to live, and I am delighted that they made so much for us," Diana smiled up at Carl.

"Yes," said Carl, coldly, "you have petted those men so another year they will want all we make. I think it is a strange thing that Dr. Smith did not bring the notes to me before I left. I believe that there is dirt under all of this," and Carl stood with his hands on his hips and gazed at Lawyer Black.

"What are you insinuating, Carl Varden?" asked old Mr. Black. "Surely not that you doubt Dr. Smith's word."

"We can't always tell," said Carl.

Mrs. Sutton spoke quietly and meaningly to Carl. "You know Dr. Smith, Carl, as well as we do—but one thing you won't doubt, is your father's handwriting. You should be thankful that we still have the old home free from debt, as you heard Lawyer Black just say. But for what Diana made for us we would be in debt, and that would mean a mortgage on the home. I am sorry that mother was not able to settle this in her way, and to have made a will, but we all know that she could not have been with us as long as she was, had she been fretted with business worries."

"You are right, sister," said Diana, "I would

have rather given up the home than to have worried mother by mentioning her making a will."

Carl walked over by Mr. Black as the sisters talked, and then he turned to Mrs. Sutton and said: "Mother did make a will, though. I found it, and I will get it and turn it over to Lawyer Black at once, as we will want him to still look after our business, won't we? I did not mention it before, as Diana was so ill, and I thought we better wait until she was better," and Carl entered the house. Lawyer Black looked puzzled and he said: "He must be mistaken—your mother never made a will, for she would have come to me. She knew that I had charge of all her husband's business," and the old man rose and walked up and down the long veranda. Diana look mystified at Mrs. Sutton, who said: "Mother never made a will or she would have told us."

Carl then returned and said: "It is best to turn it in to Lawyer Black's hands—don't you think so?"

"Certainly," answered Diana, and Mrs. Sutton together. Lawyer Black took the paper and as he read his face turned red, then from red to purple, and the veins stood out over the bushy eyebrows. He turned to Carl as he finished and said, "Who is this man, Smith?"

"He is Lawyer Smith's son, of Portland," answered Carl. "He spent the hunting season here."

"And did Mrs. Varden have him make that will?"

"I can't understand it," said old Mr. Black, "I will read the will only after I see that Smith." Mr. Black bid Diana good-bye, and he said kindly, "I will see after the lumber business and be back here in a few days. In the meantime you keep up a good heart, for every cloud has a silver lining." Then he turned to Carl, saying, "I think you better send for that fellow, Smith, and let him finish up this business he has begun, and I will finish up mine in an honorable way. I will not accept this other business—let Smith do that," and he went muttering to himself. Old Lawyer Black fell over Dr. Smith as he was coming up the walk. He was puffing and blowing in anger.

"Well, well, bless my heart, Mr. Black, and am I falling away so fast that you can't even see me?" and Dr. Smith looked down on his portly stomach and laughed like a boy.

"Pardon, I beg your pardon," said Mr. Black, excitedly. "I was thinking of important business, and, by Gad, I'll tell you all about it," and to Dr. Smith's surprise he poured out the story of the will. Dr. Smith's eyes filled with tears as he said: "I trust they have not told the girl.

God bless her, and she has had a close call already and this might be too much for her."

"No, indeed; think I'd read the cursed unjust thing? Let that other fellow do that; the low-lived cur! I told Carl Varden to send for him at once, and, another thing, Mrs. Varden did not do that of her own free will. No, she never!" and the old man struck his fists stogether with a resounding blow.

"Carl Varden is a spoiled child, all right," said Dr. Smith. "He is no more like his father and mother than if he never bore their name. He is to marry that Ditson girl from Chicago, and what will that mean to Diana?"

"It means he will turn her out of the home that she has made," blustered old Lawyer Black.

"What can that girl do out in the world, and you know they have only the five thousand that is to be divided between the two sisters, and what will that mean? What can a woman do out in the world with a tender heart like Diana. She was meant to be in a home; that is her place! How few women can fill that place these days. Here is one, fitted only for that, thrown out on the world. Oh, God! that such things can be. What will that $5,000 mean, compared to the mansion that goes to Carl Varden. I tell you, Mrs. Varden was forced into making 'that will," and Mr. Black stamped his feet in disgust.

Dr. Smith said, as he turned up the walk: "I must go and see that they don't give my patient another set-back by that darned will," and he left Mr. Black still standing and talking. After Lawyer Black left them on the veranda Mrs. Sutton said quietly: "Carl, let me see that will," and Carl turned it over to her and went into the house. As Mrs. Sutton read she felt the blood rush to her head, and then as she had finished, she gazed again at the names of the witnesses—Hettie Gaynor and then Rev. Hague and Fred Smith. It seemed almost impossible to think that her mother had made that will, and yet there was the familiar handwriting, and she remembered the night that Hettie came in by the fire and offered to stay with Aunt Dorotha, but what surprised her was the name of the Rev. Hague. How could he witness anything so unjust; no doubt he thought the currency was more than the real estate—but how little that really was and but for Diana they would not even had that. She did not mind for herself, but Diana, poor Diana. Then she wondered where Carl had found that will—could he have known the night that it was made? No, she did not think that Carl could have known the contents, he could not ever have been so heartless and selfish. Then she thought of Hettie and Diana's kindness to her, and what could

Fred Smith be made of that he could do anything so unjust and selfish to Diana. Then he had come back for Diana to entertain after making that will; if she had been in his place she would have been ashamed to come under the same roof with the girl. He even knew how Diana took a man's place in the lumber camps while Carl was away spending the money that rightfully belonged to herself and Diana. Oh, this was a mean thing to do! "Sister, oh Sister," said Diana, after she had seen Mrs. Sutton had finished reading the will, "let me have it if you are through." Mrs. Sutton looked up sadly and said: "Diana, I think that you have had quite enough of business today," and she moved to the door with the paper under her arm. "Besides, Diana, we best await Mr. Smith, and let him explain this affair. I don't understand why mother ever made a will without our knowing something of it."

"Oh, but sister, I am so glad that she did make a will and settle the whole thing just as she wanted it. Let me see it, sister; I am quite well and my brain is clear enough to take up the work again now. There is so much to have done around the old home."

Mrs. Sutton still moved toward the door and Diana rose and said, coming close to her:

"Sister, I want to see that will now," and Mrs.

Sutton, thinking the worry would be worse than the reading of it, passed it to Diana, and they sat down, side by side. As Diana's eyes rested on the well-known handwriting of her mother her eyes filled with tears. Then, as she read it, she went over the names again—Hettie and Rev. Hague—well, she could see how Hettie's name happened to be there, but she was like Mrs. Sutton, she could not understand why the Rev. Hague happened to be in this without either she or Mrs. Sutton's knowledge. Another thing, she could see and that was that Carl and Hettie had forced the gentle old mother into making that will, for Ora's words now passed through her brain. She had heard Hettie, Viola and Carl planning this up the river. Yes, she understood now; and so Fred Smith was into it, too. She felt hurt at this though. And to think that Rev. Hague and Fred Smith could so far forget themselves as to practice such underhand work, while they were her guests, and yet, most of all, she felt disgusted with Carl, not because of the injustice done herself and Mrs. Sutton, but the idea of his pestering that dear old mother. Well, he had some manhood left, for he was ashamed to stand by when Mrs. Sutton took it from his hands to read it. Then she thought of all the money that Carl had spent on this trip and know-

ing that it rightfully belonged to her sister.

"Poor old Musz; she did not realize what it would mean to me, and she was so childish, too," and Diana placed the will in her lap. Mrs. Sutton said: "Diana, I did not want you to see that will until you were stronger, and we had seen Fred Smith, and had an explanation from his lips."

"But, sister, there is mother's handwriting, and surely in honor to our mother who would never doubt her reason, and although she was very childish, we know that she loved you and I as much as she did Carl. It was done because somebody painted in glowing words a falsehood regarding my father's business, and she thought that she had left you and I as well cared for as she did Carl and sister. I thank God that she never knew."

Dr. Smith came hurriedly up the walk, and he greeted the two sisters kindly, and his eyes fell on the will and became misty. Mrs. Sutton picked up the will and entered the house.

"This is such a perfect day, Diana, I thought it would do you good to go out for a drive. Would you like to take a drive with an old man like me?"

Diana's eyes smiled up at him through wet lashes, and she said, "I would be so glad, Dr. Smith, to get out in the lanes again."

"Well, child, I will be back in a few moments."

Diana watched the aged form as he went down the walk, thinking, after all, she would not give such friends as old Dr. Smith and Lawyer Black for all the wealth in the world. They were men who had stood by her father and mother and had been proven true as the days passed into years. She would rather have their friendship than all the wealth they could have bestowed on her. Now she thought of Viola, whom Carl had planned to marry in the coming months, and then she would bid farewell to the old home and all that she had so dearly loved. Then she thought of Maggie and Amos, the two trusted old servants, and of what it would mean to have Viola come in over them. She knew what their life would be under her, for Viola had criticized Aunt Dorotha for treating the old people so well, and had heartlessly said: "When you are gone nobody else can live with them, you have petted them so."

But now what about herself. What would she do without the old home. Yes, she would be all alone and must go into the world and find something to do, for two thousand dollars would not go far in the future. Queer this thought—she who had a short year ago laughed at Prof. Vonner when he said, "Sometime when you are

alone in the world, keep my card, and when that time comes, call on me." Well, why not? Yes, she could go to Prof. Vonner and ask him to fulfil his offer, made under the spell of the firs, and when she was happy. She was away behind in her music; she had not had the heart to even hum a tune, but she was better now and she would practice every day after this and then go in training for a year or so under Prof. Vonner and she would make a success, and then, perhaps, if she were successful she could come back and have money enough to buy the old home back from Carl. Then she could dream on and on forever, but one thing certain: she could not waste any time on moaning over her sad fate now. She must be brave, like her dear old dad always was, and they would never fail her. She would write and ask Prof. Vonner if he still held open his offer. Mrs. Sutton came out, followed by Marie. Mrs. Sutton said: "I told Marie that Dr. Smith was here."

"Yes, Marie, he was here and he is going to take me for a drive I am just waiting for you to run up and bring me my wraps," and Diana smiled in a cheerful way. Marie was so glad to find Diana like this, for her mother had told her of the will and she was afraid it would send Diana back again into a relapse. Mourning gar-

ments made her beauty more conspicuous than ever, as the black threw out the curves of the graceful figure. When Dr. Smith came back up the walk he paused in astonishment at the bright sparkling eyes of the girl, and then he exclaimed: "By Gad, but won't the young men envy me to-day?" When Diana was seated by his side she waved a farewell to Maria and Mrs. Sutton. Diana felt the clear refreshing breeze from the fir trees touch her brow. She told him of the bringing of Viola into her old home. She said: "I will have to leave then." She told him of her plans, and said: "Now you must keep this a secret, for I do not want anyone, not even sister to know of my plans.

"Girl, I had hoped you would have work in a home of your own some day soon. What about Harry Maxwell?"

"Oh, no, Dr. Smith, Harry and I are only good friends, and I expect before long to hear of Harry and little Iola Vandyke's marriage. Listen to me, Doctor; don't tell anyone of my work, for if I fail."

"Fail," broke in Dr. Smith, "as if you could fail. Where is old man Duncan and his son. I had fancied that he would take care of our girl when you two were growing up."

Diana's eyes filled as she thought of Pal, and

she said, "Well, doctor, what if I did have a place in my heart for him, and I did—Pal did not want to fill that place. I hear that there is another who fills that place in his heart, so you understand now just why I must go out into the world, and I must look into the future and I will dream on and on forever of my ideal man. I will live always with the spell of the firs around my life.

When they entered the office of Mr. Black he glanced up and a frown came over his brow as he said: "Be seated, and I will get to business at once. He began piling up books and papers. Then he said to Smith: "Now, I want you to run over this." He explained all of the business of Mr. Varden, and then he told Smith of the failure of the lumbering before Mr. Varden's death, and told him of all that was left to the firm in currency. He told of what Carl had spent on his trip the past winter, and then he said that if it had not been for Diana's work in the lumber camps there would have not been any currency left. Now Smith do you get it as I do. Lawyer Black looked up as Smith went over the work.

"Yes, Mr. Black, your books are clear and easy to read," said Smith.

"Well now," went on Lawyer Black, "this will

be an easy thing to settle. By that will you have there, the currency is to be divided equally between the two sisters. Well now, after paying Dr. Smith the notes we have only left—what Diana made on the lumber, which is five thousand. Is that right?" and Lawyer Black looked at Smith who sat like one stunned. Then Smith did not answer. Lawyer Black went on. "Now that will leave each sister just two thousand five hundred dollars, and the son is to have all the personal property, and the estate, which will mean two million dollars, as he gets stock, farm, lumbering outfit, and the magnificent home. Is that right, Smith—as you make it?"

Smith's face turned pale as he realized what it all really meant, and he felt a sense of shame for Carl who heard all with a set cold face.

"Now," went on Mr. Black, "What do you make it, sir?"

Mr. Black looked into Smith's shocked face. "I think that the money that was paid for the notes of Doctor Smith should come in part, out of the estate," said Smith, "for it was without the knowledg of this debt that Mrs. Varden made that will."

"A part of it," cried Lawyer Black, "I say all of it should come out of that estate—but it can't be done unless the son is willing."

Carl stood in the window and his face flushed in anger as Lawyer Black said this. He turned and said, "Dr. Smith had no right to collect that money after those notes ran out, and he will never get a penny out of me. If Diana was fool enough to pay for it, she should be the one to lose it."

He got no further, for Smith whirled on his chair as if he were on springs, and burst out in curses. His lips were white, and he hurled at Carl the cowardliness of a man who would let his sister run the place as long as there was a chance of putting one penny into his own pockets. Then he told him of how he had stood by and let that Gaynor woman force his mother into making that cursed will.

"If I had only known as much as you did, Carl Varden, about that currency I would rather have been shot than to have ever made that will. It was a dastardly, low, thieving trick."

Smith picked up his hat and ran to the station and caught the train just as it was pulling out of Essex. Carl turned.

"Arrange this business at once, so I can place my affairs in other hands. Then you can settle with the girls whenever you get ready."

Mr. Black wrote for some moments and then he handed him some papers, saying, "Now you

send your sisters up here, and I wipe my hands of this deceitful business."

Carl drew a breath of relief as he left the office. He went to Lawyer Grant across the street, and engaged him as a future attorney. Then he turned and walked toward home. For the first time he felt a sense of shame steal over him, as he thought of how Diana had worked for the old home and mother. Yet it was all for his Viola—now she would not refuse to come to the old home. He would be glad when Diana did get away for he knew that when Viola went to change the old home, Diana would not like it, and there would be a clash sooner or later. He could not have Viola worried. As he went in the home gate a messenger came to the door and said, "Here is a message for Carl Varden. He opened it; it was from Viola saying that her father was dead. He ran up to his room, and came down shortly with a suit case. He said to Diana, "You take care of the place until I come back. He gave the order in the old commanding voice—and went on to tell Diana of Viola's father.

Diana only answered, "You want to come back soon for I am going away, too."

He never answered as he dashed down the street to catch the outgoing train. Diana thought

of how negligent he had been of her messages of the loved mother. She said to herself, "It is all Viola now."

Diana told them all her plans for the future. "Now, Mr. Black, if I go away and leave the lumbering to you and Dr. Smith, will you look after it for me and help me make money enough to buy the old home back. Will you do that for me?"

"My child, my child, we don't want you out in the world, but if go you will, I will do all I can to soon get you back."

"Now you are to remain not only my attorney but my manager, and now the other plans of mine are to be kept secret, until I make a success," and then Diana and Mrs. Sutton left the office for the old home.

CHAPTER XIX.

DIANA BIDS FAREWELL TO THE FIR TREES

It seemed to Pal as if something were whispering to him amid the maple leaves that waved above him. He looked up at the branches and it made him think of Maine. It was September and the Maine woods were in its glory, with

the Autumn tints. He knew just how beautiful it would be there now. Mr. Hyde, Etta and Ora were all planning a trip to the Maine woods, and they had asked him to go with them. Ora would be here now before long, for she had written to Mr. Hyde that she was coming. As Pal thought of this, he longed to go, too. Diana had never answered his photo that he had sent her when her mother was so ill last winter. He should have written a line, too, when he had sent it. He knew she got it, for Harry wrote Ora that she had. Then he thought of what Harry had said about his treatment of Diana. He also said she was saying to his picture, "How could you believe it, Pal." Yes, he would go back with the Hyde party and give Diana a chance to explain this all away, for he knew now that he could never love another as he did Diana!

Weeks sped by, and it was the last week in September before Harry and Ora put in their appearance. One night Pal came up the walk to find them all on the veranda. Harry caught his hand. "Glad to see you, Pal, and you don't object to my following you to your room, do you?" "Come on," said Pal.

Harry linked his arm through his and together they entered Pal's room.

Harry turned to Pal and said, "Pal what is

the trouble with you anyway—to cause you to treat the dearest girl on earth, as you have. Pal, I know Diana loves you, and I can't fathom why you are so changed toward her. Out of respect for the family I should think you would have sent her a line at her mother's death. After the will was read, Diana is turned out of the old home."

"My God—can it be?" Harry sat down and buried his face in his hands. Pal had stood listening, as if he did not comprehend what Harry was saying. Now he came and shook Harry and said, "Harry, Harry, what are you saying? Is Diana's mother dead? "

Harry raised his head and told Pal all he knew about it of Viola coming to the old home, of Diana's work in the lumber camps, and of her illness. He ended by saying, "Pal, I love that girl more than you ever did, and yet she does not love anyone but you! Man, for Heaven's sake, why have you treated her like that?"

Pal gazed into Harry's frank open face and said, "Harry, I do love her; I have always loved her! I'll tell you why I have done as I have, and you can judge if I am wrong."

Pal told Harry all about the day in the fir nook, and of what Diana had said. "Harry, tell me if I am a fool. I have tried to forget her

but I can't do it. I wrote her at the time her mother was ill, and she never answered that. Harry, I do love her—I don't see how any man could help but love her!"

Harry sat and studied for some time after Pal told him and then he asked, "Pal, was it the day the nurse came to relieve Diana?"

"Yes, I remember the day now."

"Diana had not had a wink of sleep for two nights. I heard Dr. Smith say so, and you know how tired and worn she was, Pal. She went back to the fir nook to rest. She needed the rest, too, Pal; you know that, and you know and I know how Mrs. Gaynor treated her before ever Gaynor saw Diana—you know that. Every one on that place can tell you how she treated Diana—long before she was married to Gaynor. Pal, you just said you did not see how any man could help but love Diana, and you are right. I don't deny that I love her—but remember she don't love me—she only likes me as an old friend, but why not Gaynor love her, as well as you and I. It might be that he found her there sleeping and he could not resist the temptation of kissing the face of the girl. She would never know, and then you come along, Pal—and see him and go to the girl and accuse her of what she knew nothing of, and she took it

as an insult, for Diana would take that as an insult, for I know Diana did not know. She is so good and pure—and not even you, Pal, can prove to me that she is not. She is heart-broken at the insult and to think that you believed it of her, and Pal Duncan, here we are leaving her to bear her sorrows alone—we who were always ready to enter the pleasures! What curs we men are, even Carl, away in Chicago, and Diana in that old home alone! Pal, be a man and go back to this girl, and, if you do love her, tell her so and stick to it, will you?"

"Harry, I intended to go back before you came, and now I feel that I can't go quick enough. Harry, do you really think that she was asleep when she lay in Gaynor's arms," said Pal doubtfully.

"Believe it, why of course I believe it," said Harry quickly, "Diana is not the girl to rest in a married man's arms. I cannot blame Gaynor, Pal."

Harry thought of the night he, too, had held her in his arms and kissed her lips unknown to her; he could not blame Gaynor for loving this girl. How he had wished that he might fill the place in her heart as Pal had done. He intended to send Pal to her if it were in his power to do so. Pal thought that perhaps, after

all, that Harry was right, for he knew that Diana had hardly slept an hour all the time that Hettie was sick. He remembered the night that they were out in the canoe, and he had lifted her over and put her on the cushions in the canoe and she had never wakened and why not as Harry said? He remembered the look of surprise that had come over her face as he accused her of being in Gaynor's arms, of her cries to him as he left her, heart-broken in the fir nook.

"Pal, I love you more than anything on earth."

He felt deeply the insult that he had cast in her face, and now no doubt she would never forgive him. He thought of what the loss of her mother would mean to her, and of Viola coming into the old home. Etta slipped a letter under the door and called his name saying, "You boys hurry up, for dinner will soon be ready."

Pal took the letter and it was postmarked at Essex, and written in a childish scrawl. Pal hastily opened the letter, while Harry sat gazing out the window. Pal read on and first a smile lighted his eyes, and then as he read a low moan escaped his lips, which brought Harry back to reality.

"What is it, Pal?"

"It is a letter from little Thelma Medford," and she says—oh, read it yourself, Harry," and Pal passed him the letter. Pal laid his head on the table and said, "I may be too late!" Harry took the letter and he laughed heartily as Thelma began by telling Pal that he had been a bad, bad boy, never to keep his promise of writing to her, but John had given her his address and she was jest going to write to spite him, anyway. "I do think you just as mean as they make them, Pal Duncan, never to come home at Christmas time, cause we were all at Aunt Dorotha's. I don't believe that Aunt Di was very happy, 'cause you never came. Did you know that Aunt Dorotha has gone away, and Auna Diana said she has gone to live with God. Aunt Diana she come pretty near going, too, for she was jest terribly sick. Every day when Dr. Smith would come from there I would run after him, and ask how Aunt Diana was, and was she going to where Aunt Dorotha had gone, and his eyes would jest cry, and cry, and I cried, too. She did get better after a long, long time, and now she, John, Ray, Bessie and Marie are up at the camp where we were last year. She wanted mama and us all to go; but mama would not let us leave school. Aunt Diana told me something before she went up in the camp. One night I found her

all alone in the orchard where you were, Pal, the last time I saw you. Well, I jest crept up, easy like, and Aunt Diana never heard me at all, and she was singing low and easy like, "Some Day When Dreams Come True." When she finished singing, she said, jest like she was talking to somebody, 'I'll come back then when my dreams come true,' and I jest said, 'Where are you going, Aunt Di?' and she jumped up, surprised. When she saw it was jest me she laughed. Then she pulled me on her lap and kissed me and her cheeks were jest as wet, and she said, 'Thelma, I am going to tell you a secret and you must never tell anyone. I am going away—way off; when I come down from the camps and I won't be here for years and years again, and, perhaps, never at all, unless I can make heaps and heaps of money. Then if I do, why, I'll come back and build that large house up the river, under the fir trees, and you and I will go up there and live with our wild friends under the spell of the firs, and we will be so happy then, Pet,' 'cause she said then we could jest dream on and on forever; 'won't that be nice?' But I'd rather have Aunt Di here all the time, and I don't want her to go way—way off, but I guess she is going away, sure enough, for Mrs. Sutton told mama that Miss Viola is coming to take care of Mr.

Carl and Aunt Diana will go out in the cold world, and Mrs. Sutton cried, and so did mama. I asked Aunt Diana where she's going. She said, 'I am not sure, Pet, but when I come back from the camps I am going.' I wish you had stayed here, Pal, for then I think that Aunt Diana won't want me to go way off. My, but I'll be awful lonesome without her and I guess everybody will be lonesome for her, and yet I am not going to tell anyone but jest you, what she and I are going to do. I expect if you want to come and visit us in the house under the fir trees that you better write to me sometimes. Are you never going to come back any more, Pal? I told you that perhaps that Aunt Diana would not be here, and I guess she won't be when you come back. I don't never go up to Aunt Dorotha's house when Aunt Diana is not there. I guess I won't never go there any more if she leaves."

As Harry read he began to wonder what Diana was going to do. Surely her father had money enough to keep Diana without seeking employment. Yes, he must have left plenty, but Diana would not stay with Viola. That was it. He turned to Pal, who sat with his head still bowed on the table, and asked: "Pal, are you going to Maine with us, and back to Diana?"

"Yes, Harry, I am going, but I am afraid that I am going too late. What a fool I was to doubt her, Harry! What a confounded fool, and what can she think of me leaving her in all this sorrow with no word of love. Harry, I did write to her when Ora was here last, and told me of her mothers' illness. She never answered. I know that she will never forgive me, Harry.

* * * * * * * * * *

As Diana and her party were preparing to leave Mr. Baylor's camp, the party was to accompany them down as far as the rapids. Mr. Baylor went in Diana's canoe. Before she had left her at the rapids she had promised her to accompany her as far as Boston on her trip to the golden west, with his party. As they parted, Diana let him step in Mr. Driscoll's canoe. She said: "Well, I will see you all later," and they parted with laughter and kind, cheerful words. Diana and her party spent one more night in the old camp. Diana went to the campfire after they were all sleeping and dreamed on until midnight—then, with sobs and tears, she bade farewell to the great old campfire and the fir trees. In the morning all traces of her sorrow had vanished and she kept the party in laughter and cheer until they reached the pier. Then they all turned to the old home with Diana. On the

following morning Diana led Bonnie Bess out and went to old Lawyer Black and told him all about what she had found in the great timber. They then planned for the winter's work. Diana said: "Now, you must explain it all to Dr. Smith. He has promised to help you carry it on for me." Then she held out her hand and said, "I guess I best say good-bye for good, this time, for I am going in the morning." Tears filled the old man's eyes as he said, "Good luck be with you, and don't forget, little girl, you have friends here in Essex."

"I could never forget you and old Dr. Smith," replied Diana, and she went out and mounted Bonnie Bess, and went to old Dr. Smith's office. "We shall miss you, God knows we will. May He watch over you and bring you back to us soon, the same pure-hearted girl that you are today."

Diana told him of the work in the lumber camps and requested him to go see Lawyer Black, and as she held out her hand in farewell she said:

"Do all you can for me, for I want to buy the old home back, you know."

"I will, my child, I will, and may God bless you."

Then Diana went to bid Mrs. Medfords' family farewell. She found the Rev. Hague there,

and he had become very attentive to little Miss Brewer. It was with sadness and surprise that they heard of Diana's leaving. Thelma went to the old home with Diana and followed her from room to room and helped her to brush Carl's clothes and lay them away. As Diana was cleaning his coat a letter fell out of the pocket and she saw her name on it. She picked it up. It was the letter that Pal had written her at the time of her mother's illness, and Carl had forgotten it. She read it and she felt so glad that Pal had thought of her, but yet the letter was written as if from the most distant stranger. Well, she would answer by a card and thank him for the few lines, although she did receive them so late, and she wondered if he knew that her mother was gone..

CHAPTER XX.

DIANA SUCCEEDS IN THE WORLD OF MUSIC.

"There's love in it, too, and there's faith beyond measure
That follows wherever you roam;
It may not be art, but it's reading and pleasure,
A good bulky letter from home."

Three years have passed since we last saw Diana. She had entered the Golden City to study music for her future career. Mr. Vonner let her study in California for two years, as she said she wanted to be perfect as she could be before she ever went on the stage to sing for the public. At the end of two years she stepped into the limelight and also into the hearts of the people. She had gone to Europe, as Prof. Vonner said that she could make a fortune over there with a voice like her's, and she had accompanied him and Mrs. Vonner to their home over in London, and it had been as Prof. Vonner said. London knew good class of music. She had won both fame and fortune, and today she had set her feet on the dear old U. S. A. soil once more. She was to tour the large cities of America, and then her contract ran out in Boston, and she was going back to Maine, dear old Maine and the fir trees. For the first time in three years she sat down and wrote Marie and Mrs. Sutton of all that had come to her. She said: "I have the money and now I am coming home. If Carl don't want to sell the old home I will build up the river and live under the firs—the dear old firs!" During the three years she had not written, and had received few letters, as they only made her lonely. Now she

wrote to old Dr. Smith and Mr. Black and she old them all in glowing words of her work and that she was coming home just as soon as her contract closed. Marie had written her of the party that went up to camp, and that Pal had been heart-broken at finding her gone. Well, no doubt Etta could fill her place, she had thought. She would go from California to Chicago and then nearer and nearer home and the fir trees. As she finished the letters she felt happier than she had for years. Diana had changed but little. She had a sad look in the deep dark eyes. They were still filled with love for the whole wold when they reached Chicago. Diana was in her glory. She was disapointed when the program was changed and they were to go back to Oregon. Well, if it must be, she would write to little Iola Vandyke and see if her invitation still held good. Harry had said that the spell of the firs had reached he and Iola, and so they might be married and gone by now. But when Diana stepped out in the station at Portland, Oregon, her fears were vanished, for little Iola came rushing to meet her as of old. Behind was a young man trying to keep in step with the girl. He was tall and fair, with Iola's eyes, but there was a sinister smile on his lips. Iola came only to his waist, as he was very tall, and

with heavy-set shoulders, slightly stooped. As Iola caught her hand and kissed her she said: "So glad, Diana, so awfully glad you have come. Then she turned and introduced the man. "This is my brother, Ned Vandyke, and this is my friend Diana Varden, brother."

The man clasped Diana's hand and stared into her face. Diana felt a shudder creep over as he smiled. "I am glad to have the pleasure of meeting the Song Bird of which we read so much." Diana thanked him. She felt a dislike arise in her heart against Iola's brother. As they entered the automobile Ned Vandyke gave again the coarse vulgar stare into Diana's face. Iola chatted merrily on, as of old. She held Diana's hand all the way—telling her how glad she was to have her with her.

"I have been very lonely and I am so glad you have come. How long will your company be here?"

"For just one week," said Diana, "and then we go to Colorado, but I wish I were going straight back to Maine and that you were coming with me. Can't you come, Iola?"

"Brother and I were talking of going to an aunts in Denver soon, and it may be that we can go that far with you."

"No reason why we can't," said Ned Vandyke.

Then they reached the massive home of the Vandyke's. As they stepped out Ned Vandyke held Diana's hand in a warm clasp, as he helped her out. She felt that she could never stand to stay a week with Iola if he were always around, for she did not like him. Her cheeks were flushed in anger at the way he held her hand. She followed Iola in. There sat an old man. He must have been very much like his son in his youth, but he had darker eyes and was more like Iola in his manner and so gentle and winning. Then all at once Diana remembered that this was Cousin [illegible] Mr. Vandyke came forward kindly and told her that they felt honored to have her as a guest, for they had heard much of her success as a noted singer. He watched Diana's every move as she followed Iola to her room. Then he turned to his son, who came in as the girls were leaving.

"Gad, boy, I have never seen such a form before, and eyes. They make you feel as if she is looking into your soul. Now, son, keep straight while she is here," and the old man looked reprovingly at the man before him.

"It's worth a try, anyhow, Dad, hey?" he answered. "She's a peach, all right," and Ned Vandyke threw himself into an armchair. Ned Vandyke, since his mother died, had been drinking

heavily, and although he had always been a wild fellow, he had never been as reckless as he was now. Iola had done all in her power to keep him straight, and to keep him near her. It was with curses that he left her at home crying while he sought the roughs and toughs of town. When Diana had written that she was coming, little Iola went to him and begged him to stay straight while Diana was with them. She did not want Diana to know of Ned's faults, and she intended to keep him near her, for she could not stand for Diana to know of the disgraceful affairs Ned got into while drinking, and he had answered Iola, "I'll have to see her before I make any promises. If she is as charming as you say, I might try and help you entertain her, but I presume she will be like all the rest of your friends—Viloa Ditson, for instance."

"She is not like Viola," retorted Iola indingantly, "but please remember that her brother married Viola, so please do not make remarks about her before Diana."

"Well, we shall see," answered Ned Vandyke.

Now he had seen for himself and he was also sure Iola had spoken truthfully regarding her friend. The girls came downstairs. Diana was dressed in a pale blue satin, and she made a picture as she entered the parlor where Ned and

Mr. Vandyke sat. They both rose and offered her their seat. Diana told them of her work and of the many funny predicaments that she had been placed in since she had been on the stage. She told them of her travels. They all were laughing gaily and Iola was very happy, for she noticed that Ned was showing Diana every attention. As they went to the music hall that night, Ned Vandyke sat in the seat with Diana, much to Diana's chagrin. Iola was glad when they reached the hall and she went to join the company. When Diana came on the stage the house rang with applause. As her voice rang out as clear as a bell, in an instant quiet reigned and not a murmur was heard. Iola leaned forward; she had never heard Diana sing like that before. It was no wonder that Diana's voice had made all London look up and take notice. As they listened, they were charmed by the sweetness and purity, and the ease and gracefulness with which she sang, and then the undeniable personal attractions. There was music in every note, and best of all, feeling. When she left the stage the audience seemed to be stricken dumb for just a few moments, and then the whole house rang in cheers for her return. Once more she came back and flowers covered the

stage. She saw Iola watching her and she smiled and burst forth into the song they all had loved, "Some Days When Dreams Come True." She could not tell why, after all the years that she should sing this song for the first time, and yet it carried her back to the old days. She was back at the old home, the campfire, and she forgot everything, everybody. As she sang at first, the audience wondered why this singer had turned from "La Traviata" and began this love song, but as the voice rose and fell, it had a new meaning to them. It touched the hearts as no music ever had before. When Diana joined Iola and the others, they worshipped the girl. Ned Vandyke was now very courteous to her. When they had entered the home of the Vandyke's Ned whispered to Iola: "That girl is a different specimen from most of your friends." Iola's heart beat joyfully, for she felt that her brother would not disgrace her now before her friend. That night Diana wrote long letters to Harry and Ora and told them now she could come home, as she had accomplished what she started out for. She put her heart into the letters as she wrote, and then she told of the little girl that she was visiting, for Iola had confided in her the love that she bore for Harry. Diana told of her sweetness of character, and th ekindness that she had received

at the hands of the little girl, and she hinted that Harry might find a very congenial companion, if he would come to Portland, for she thought that he would get a very favorable answer to the question that he must ask some day. Then she wrote to little Thelma Medford, and as she pictured the golden curls blowing in the breeze she wondered if Thelma had forgotten her and the plans they had made about that great, large house. She now had planned to build that great, large house now and just live under the great fir trees and dream on and on forever. The weeks flew by and the day for the departure drew near Iola and Ned planned to go as far as Denver with her, and although she was so glad to have little Iola, she did wish that Ned would not accompany them. Of late he had shown only too plainly his affection for her, and it was always in loving terms that he spoke to her. She despised him all the more, knowing that he could treat Iola kindly if he would, but it was always with sharp, bitter words that he answered her, if he answered her at all. One morning Diana was walking in the yard and admiring the flowers and Ned Vandyke joined her and said:

"Miss Varden, you are always dreaming; let me waken you and keep you awake."

"I have everything all my own way in my dreams," said Diana quietly.

"Well, I prefer having everything going all my way in reality," said Ned Vandyke.

"I sometimes fail to get them going that way."

"Oh, I fail to have them come my way in reality, too," said Diana, "and that is why I dream."

Ned gazed into her face and cried: "Miss Varden, I love you. Can't you care for me a little. Wake up from your dreaming and try to love in reality" and he caught her hand.

"Mr. Vandyke, you shall not talk like that to me; you hardly know me," and she pulled her hand from his grasp and started to the house, but he came and stood before her and said: "Miss Varden, I want an answer. Will you try to love me."

"No, oh, no, sir, I have no love to give, for my love belongs to another," said Diana, sadly. "What you ask is impossible, you see."

"Yes, I see," said Ned. "I heard Viola Ditson say that you had thrown yourself on a man without his asking for your love. If he is the one you speak of, would it not be better to forget him and try and love one who would return your love and—"but ere he finished Diana was gone. He muttered low curses on his luck, and said in a vulgar voice, "You will be glad to marry me before I am through with you, my lady," and a

sinister smile played over his lips. When they reached Colorado, Iola's aunt met them, and he invited Diana to join them at her home. Diana thanked her, but she was only too glad to get rid of Ned Vandyke, so she told Iola that she would see her before she left. Diana found comfortable rooms at the hotel with the rest of the company and she then went for her mail and found two or three letters from Essex, and one great bulky one from Marie. She could hardly wait until she got back to her room to read it. When Pal went to look after the mining stock of Mr. Hyde's he had hoped against hope that he would find Diana. Harry and Ora had promised to let him hear from them if they had heard anything from her, but one year went by and then he heard no word from her. He invested in mines and money was rolling into his pockets, but what did it mean to him now, without Diana. No one cared nothing for gold. Diana was lost to him. Gaynor had written him that he wished he would come to Boston, that he wanted to see him. Pal did not go. Again Gaynor wrote, and this time said: "Pal, it concerns your future." Pal made up his mind that when he went back to New York he would go down to Boston and see Gaynor and what he meant by this business. The next year Harry worte him that Marie

had told him that Diana was a noted singer and was then in Europe. Pal's heart grew cold; she was lost to him now forever! No, for he would follow her—yes, even to the ends of the earth. He would not give up until he had her forgiveness, anyway. Then Pal got a man and put him in charge of his work and he went back to New York, and there he found another letter from Gaynor. He decided he would go and see Gaynor at once. The night train carried him to Boston. In the morning he found Gaynor at the office. Gaynor met him with friendliness and then he carefully closed and locked the door before he said another word. Pal was surprised at the look of sadness that he saw in Gaynor's face and when he came back to Pal he was white, even to the lips.

"Mr. Duncan, I called you here to make a confession to you. I want your pity and not your anger." He went on to tell Pal of his life—of his struggles and his failures, and then he told him of his meeting Diana, and how she had crept into his heart without his knowledge. He told of how he had fought against it and he tried to never let anyone know of this love . Then he told of how Diana had brought him peace in his home life with Hettie. He told Pal of her confessing of the love she bore for him—the one

man of her dreams. "She said that you were, Pal." He told Pal what she had said about being happy if he loved another, and could be happy; "why she would just love and dream of you, forever. Now, Pal I want to tell you all about the day in the fir nook. You may blame me, Pal, and perhaps I was to blame, and yet she never knew, and you would never have known. Nobody but God would have known if you had not seen me. But, Pal, I loved the girl and she was sleeping; she was tired and when I came upon her in the fir nook she had been weeping, for there were traces of tears on her face. She was sleeping so soundly and she was talking of her love for you Pal, in her sleep. I stood and watched her, and, Pal, when she threw up her arms, saying, 'The man of my dreams, I love you, Pal,' I could not stand that and I knelt by her and I lifted her tenderly in my arms, and I kissed her and then you saw the rest. I have suffered, Pal, for the thought of what it meant to Diana—the accusations that you hurled at her. She never knew. Pal, please promise me that she shall never know. She must not know, for she would hate me. Pal, I could not stand that. Tell her that I explained to you that I was just laying her in a more comfortable position, for she must never know how I love her, Pal. But I do, and, my

God, Pal, pity me—you who have so much to be thankful for. A love like that girl bestows on you would be Heaven to me," and Gaynor's head fell forward on his desk and dry sobs and moans escaped his lips. Then as Pal, still silent, Gaynor raised his head and said:

"Pal, God knows I have tried to see you to explain before this, bitter though it was for me. You would not let me see you, Pal, and I could not put that on paper."

He passed a postcard and said: "Pal, go to her. Will you forgive me and go to her?" Pal took the postcard and read the familiar handwriting. Then he read the words in verse on the card:

"Do you know the blackened timber,
Do you know that racing stream,
With the raw right-angled log jam at the end?
And the bar of sun-warmed shingle,
Where a man may bask and dream,
To the click of shod canoe poles around the bend,
It is there that we are going, with the rods and
reels and races—
To a silent smoky Indian that I know,
To a couch of new pulled hemlock,
With the starlight on our faces,
For the Red, Gods call us out and we must go."

—Kipling.

Beneath this Diana had written, "Cousin Gaynor, be ready for another camping expedition, for it is Maine for me when I get to Boston."

As Pal read, Gaynor watched the man. Yes, Pal was worthy of Diana. He had grown into a fine-looking man, a striking-looking man—a handsome man, and love was in his face as he read the card.

Gaynor said, "Pal, go to her and then go back to Maine and be happy, will you?"

"I will go, Gaynor, for I have always loved her. Under the circumstances, you do not blame me for doubting her, do you?"

"Yes, Pal, I blamed you for doubting her. I was the one all to blame. But I have suffered more than you know."

Pal saw the man's eyes fill with tears and his heart went out in pity. He could see that he had suffered, and then he thought of Hettie. He held out his hand to Gaynor and said: "I thank you, Gaynor, and I hope I may hereafter prove as true as you have in your love, and may God bless you for what you have done for me today," and Pal left the office with a heartful of sympathy. He hurried back to New York and the next morning he was going to Colorado. When Diana entered her room and opened her letters she was overjoyed at finding letters from Dr.

Smith and Mr. Black, and they both wrote of the money realized from the lumbering, and for her to come back and fulfil her promise, as she was sadly needed in Essex. She smiled as she thought of how soon she would be there. Then there was Mrs. Sutton's letter that was filled with love like Auna Dorotha's would have been; then the big fat letter from Marie. She wrote just the news that Diana longed for of home and the people.

"Uncle Carl is going to sell the old place, as Viola wants to go back to Chicago; at least, they are now on their way to Chicago, and the old place is for sale. The old place has gone awfully behind; it don't look like it did when you were there to look after it. I hope you will come back and buy it, for Lawyer Black told mama you had enough out of your lumbering to buy it back. Please do, Aunt Diana, for we people need you more than the public. I hear that Pal Duncan has become very wealthy by an investment in mining stocks, and, by the way, he is still heart free. Well, I don't know about that, but he is not married, anyway. Harry is not married, but Ora and Mr. Hyde are and so are Rev. Hague and Miss Brewer; also Della and Smith—they have been married over a year now, Bessie, and I are still ahead, though, for I have

a dear little girl that I call Diana. Bessie has a boy; we are all happy, but want you, for we miss you all the time and need you to complete our happiness. Mr. Baylor's party were here last year and Mr. Baylor said that camp life had lost some of its attractions since you had left. Mrs. Medford has another baby and Thelma thinks there is nobody as sweet as her little sister. Thelma has grown wonderfully, but she still loves Aunt Di, like the rest of us. I guess I won't tell any more in this letter or they won't let me send it in the mail."

Diana read Marie's letter over and over and it carried her back to the old home more than anything else had ever done. So Carl and Viola had tired of the old home so soon. Well, she would write to Mr. Black to buy it back for her, and then she would go back and dream on and on forever of the one man. Old Pal was not married yet. Well, she wondered if he really loved her as he said he did, as truly as she had loved him. She would love to see old Pal again, even if he were married, but how she did wish they had never quarreled. Anyway, she was going home!

She hired a canoe and she was soon sailing over the waves. As she pulled away she felt happy and free, and she was dreaming of Maine. Up beyond she saw some white blossoms and she

paddled in their midst, and they were water lilies, pure and white. Their fragrance intoxicated her, and she gathered them until her arms grew tired. Then she sat and gazed around her. It was in a lonely stretch of river, with gorges and mountains. She had gone away from all civilization and she must get back out of this wild place—for she was quite alone. As she paddled on, her arms were very tired—so she drifted on and dreamed of Pal, dear old Pal. He had bought the precious gems to her in Maine; they always made her think of Pal. Just then she heard a splashing in the water and, looking up, saw Ned Vandyke coming toward her. He must have watched her start and followed her. Here she was, with only the rocks and mountains for company. She would hurry and go back down and meet him nearer the city, and she bent to the paddle. She was a pretty picture with the canoe filled with precious blooms and her eyes sparkling and her cheeks flushed from the exertion. As the paddle rose and fell it showed the perfect form and graceful arms to perfection. Ned Vandike's eyes filled with admiration. As she came on towards him, he pulled his canoe in by hers and said: "Well Song Bird, you thought you could fly away out of my snare, did you?" Diana did not like the look in his eyes and as he turned she had smelled

the whiskey on his breath. Here she was at the mercy of his coarse, vulgar person. Before she knew what he intended doing, he stepped into her canoe and nearly upset them both. Again she shuddered as she felt at the mercy of this fellow, that she dispised. "Yes, Song Bird, you thought you would fool me out of my answer before you left Denver. Well my thoughts were correct—that you have planned to keep out of my way. I knew your easy excuses to Iola were just to keep out of my way."

"Mr. Vandike, if you come here to insult me by such talk, you had better go in your canoe," said Diana.

"Insult you, well, is that it? Well now I wont insult you if you're a nice behaved little woman." He drew nearer in the canoe. He had tied his canoe on back of hers. "Now give me the paddle, Song Bird—and Diana felt the sickening breath in her face. She drew back saying, "I prefer to paddle my own canoe; go in your own if you want to paddle," but he pulled the paddle out of her hands with a curse, and paddled with all his might in back of a great gorge. He pulled the canoe up on land. Diana cried: "Mr. Vandye, what do you mean by such actions? I must go back to the hotel; they will be waiting for me."

He threw down the paddle. "But we are not going back until you promise to marry me; if we stay here till the end of hell."

Diana's eyes filled with fear as she gazed into his bloodshot eyes. "No need to call for help, if that's what you are thinking of," and he caught her in his arms and struggled to the bank, as she struggled to be free. Then he bent to press her lips, and she screamed and struggled with all the strength that was in her. Her cries rang far out over the river, and another canoe came rushing on. It was fairly flying, as it came tearing over the waters. It was Pal!

He had reached Denver that day and had decided that he would wait until he had heard Diana sing that night before he sought her. As the time seemed long, he had hired a canoe and paddled up the river. He was coming on behind the other canoes, and had seen the man pull the paddle out of the girl's hands. He was watching and wondering as he saw them pull their canoes in around the gorge. Then he saw the man catch the girl and heard her cry for help. That cry thrilled every nerve in his body. He was soon by the bank where the girl and man were struggling. Then he saw a knife flash in the man's hand. He leaped to the bank and his arm struck out, and the man fell as if he had been shot, and

the knife flew from his hand. Diana turned to see who her rescuer was. As she turned she fell back fainting, as she saw Pal Duncan's face. Pal leaped to her side and caught her to his breast. He rained kisses over her face. Vandyke raised up and reached for the knife as he saw Pal's kisses falling over the girl's face. He jumped to his feet. Pal pulled a revolver from his pocket and demanded: "Get in that canoe, you low sneak and drop that knife," he ordered. "Drop it, I say!" cried Pal. Vandyke snarled like some wild beast as he saw the revolver pointing at him. "Now, push out," called Pal, as Vandyke sat in the canoe. Again seeing the man with the revolver, he obeyed. Then Pal carried Diana to the canoe and put her gently down and pushed out after the man who was pulling down stream for all that he was worth, to the city below. As they were going down stream as fast as paddles could pull them, Diana opened her eyes and shuddered. As her eyes met Pal's she heard the voice saying, "Lie still, little girl, and all is well." Then she came back to reality and whispered "Where is he?" Pal pointed ahead and she raised up and saw Vandyke pulling with all his might. As they came up to rowboats, canoes and motorboats Pal said: "No need of following that fellow now, for the police have him in the police launch. He

ran into some canoes and upset them. He is drunk." Pal tenderly lifted Diana out of the canoe and walked by her side to the hotel. As they went in he said: "Diana, I want to talk with you alone." She led the way to her room. Then Pal caught her to him, crying, "Diana, do you know that I have searched for you for three long years and I had given up in despair of ever having you here again. Then Gaynor showed me your card and he told me where to find you. Diana, will you ever forgive me for doubting you?" Then he told her of what Gaynor had told him. "Diana, will you ever forgive me and love me again?"

For answer she threw her white arms around his neck and pulled his lips down to meet hers in a long, lingering kiss Then she said:

"Pal, I have loved you ever since I first lay in your arms. I have always loved you, Pal—even when you forgot me, I loved you just the same." Then she told of Iola and her brother, and of how he had followed her that afternoon. "I am so sorry for poor little Iola," said Diana, "but I never want to see that man again. If you had not come, Pal, he would have killed me." Pal pressed her to his heart, saying, "Pet, he shall never have another chance to annoy you, for I

never intend for you to get out of my sight very far." Then he told of his success and of how little it had meant to him without her—but now they could go back to Maine and live under the spell of the firs and dream on and on forever. Diana told him of her buying back the old home. Then she brought Marie's letter for Pal to read, and she sat on the arm of his chair as he read. He had his arm lovingly about her waist, and her glossy hair falling on his neck, and together they read of the old home and friends in Essex. As they finished, Pal caught her to him, exclaiming: "There is nothing like a good bulky letter from home to cheer weary hearts. I am wanting to hear my Diana sing tonight and then I want to take you back with me under the spell of the firs, with me, forever and forever, to dream of love, true love."

CHAPTER XXI.

"HOME, SWEET HOME. THERE IS NO PLACE LIKE HOME"

Marie and Mrs. Sutton, with Maggie and Amos, were trying to get the old home arranged

back to its old style before Diana came back, and were just putting the finishing touch on when John and old Dr. Smith came in.

"Well, well!" exclaimed Dr. Smith, "this looks good to me, and as familiar as of old. I am glad you could do this, Mrs. Sutton, for it would break the girl's heart if she knew how her mother's precious favorites have been stored away in the attic all these years. No wonder Carl was loath to remain in the old home, and it is such a mockery! With all of her fine airs, Mrs. Carl Varden could never make any place a home. She is a hopeless case, I'm thinking. But this is fine." The old doctor caught up little Diana and tossed her high above his head and bringing her down, placed her on top of the piano, where she clapped her tiny hands in glee. She was a little fairy—this little Diana—with Marie's golden curls and laughing blue eyes and, like her mother, the smiles were always foremost.

"Bless her heart, the little darling," murmured her mother and the old doctor in concert. "May she grow up to be just such another Diana as the one whose name she bears."

Mrs. Sutton was pleased at the old doctor's praise of their work, for it had been no easy job to place each article to its accustomed place. As Viola had taken it in hand to see that each and

every piece of furniture and furnishings were packed away in the attic, and she had remodeled the home with new and costly furniture, which she and Carl shipped to Chicago ahead of them. Even then people shunned the old home, first because Viola wa ssarcastic with old friends of Aunt Dorotha's; second, because they blamed Carl for the loss of Diana from their midst. John had kept men busy repairing the stables and yards. Now it was quite like the old home once more. Just another day and their Diana would be with them. Their faces and hearts were filled with love as they thought of the home-coming. Thelma Medford came walking in, swinging her hat by the strings and her hair tossing about her face. She had grown a great deal, but she was still the lovely little lassie that Pal and Diana had worshipped.

"Here is a paper that tells all about Aunt Diana in Boston. The paper says she is beautiful, just as if we did not know that long before they did," and Thelma tossed her head in disgust. She turned to little Diana and tossed her up. Mrs. Sutton and Marie read the headlines where Madam Aurora had sung her last song to the public for some time. It praised in glowing words the wonderful hypnotic power the singer held over the crowds who gathered to hear her sing, and

then described the beauty of her face and form as well. Mrs. Sutton's face lighted up with keen pleasure when she read of her sister's success. Yet she felt a thrill of gladness pass through her at the thought of Diana coming back to the old home. For a moment she wondered if all of this glory and praise had changed Diana. She might not be contented in the old home hereafter. Marie thought that, too, and said:

"I do hope Aunt Di will give up her career as a singer now. Do you suppose she will?"

" 'Course she will,' 'spoke up Thelma, "she told me when she got money enough she was coming back here and live and dream on and on forever. I expect she meant what she said, for she never forgot a promise."

"Well, well, that is quite true, Thelma. When we get her back we are not likely to let her go soon again, are we, Thelma?" and Dr. Smith pinched Thelma's cheeks. I think Diana will not stay here long, unless she and Pal comes to an understanding," said John, as he leaned far out the window.

"I was just wondering if Pal had returned to New York while Aunt Diana was there," said Marie.

"If he did return while she was there, she will not return to the public," said John.

"I only hope Diana will be contented here at home," said Mrs. Sutton, "we all need her so much I am sure she will stay, for she has not changed much in three years so far as I can tell by her letters."

"Well, well, Mrs. Sutton will soon hear the truth," said Dr. Smith, "but I am like her in thinking Diana is the same sweet girl who left us under trying circumstances. We need her here; she belongs in the home."

They left Maggie in charge of the house as they turned down the walk to their own homes. After they left the house Maggie went to the window, while Amos stood peering around the door. Maggie turned to him, motioning him on.

"Sure and they are all gone, bejabbers; come, come on wid ye, now, and we sure will surprise the child when she arrives."

Amos came tugging a great basket of water lilies. He and Maggie knelt on the floor and arranged the beauties in the massive vases on the piano and mantles.

"Sure and she always loved the white beauties," said Maggie, as she buried her face in the blossoms. "They do be like her sweet self." She rose and placed the vase back on the mantle—the precious lilies fell in curves and clusters over the mantle. Again Maggie knelt by Amos, and

together their aged fingers flew over the flowers until the room was filled with the fragrant blooms. Maggie arose and placed her hands on her hips and surveyed the work. As Amos arose Maggie poked him in the ribs with her eblow. "Sure, Amos, and it makes me think of the day that we two were hitched together." Amos took the basket to Diana's room wiping remaining tears of joy from his eyes. They arranged the lilies. As Maggie started after him she wiped blooms in Diana's room, where all her childhood toys had been placed. At the head of the bed hung a fine painting of Aunt Dorotha. Maggie placed the lilies around the frame in hanging vases, then, like two children she and Amos crept back down the stairs. Maggie prepared their lunch and as she opened the pantry door the odor of cakes, pies and spicy foods met her nostrils. She beckoned Amos to her side and pointed to the pies that Diana had loved and said: "It sure do be a pleasure to cook for old Varden's daughter again—it sure do be." Amos laid his hand on her shoulder, saying: "Maggie, the Lord allers knows best. We felt mighty down-hearted when she left us, but I knew she would return, and we will love her all the more for her absence."

"Sure, Amos, we love her and it's me that's

a-telling ye that she is going to stay here this time. I expect Pal Duncan will come back to Essex before very long," and again Maggie poked Amos in the side as she giggled to herself. She and Amos sat down to eat their humble meal—the first in many days in Aunt Dorotha's kitchen. Early the next morning Maggie and Amos were up arranging their quarters and preparing the dinner for their Diana, and her cousins. As Maggie bustled about there was not a person in Essex as happily busy. Marie and Mrs. Sutton came back in the morning. When they opened the door to the living room Marie exclaimed, "Oh, mama, I can fancy Aunt Di is here already! Aren't they lovely, mama? Where did anybody get them so late in the season?" It was only Maggie's smiling face appearing in the door that they caught the idea. She stood wiping her hands on her apron and smiling in at their surprise. "Maggie, you did this. I am sure there is no welcome as pleasing to Diana as the water lilies," said Mrs. Sutton.

"Sure," said Maggie, "Amos and me—we wanted to help welcome her home. We went down the cove where Pal used to gather the late ones for Diana, and it is mesself that knows they are hard to get," said Maggie, as she returned to the kitchen.

"Indeed, this makes me think of poor old Pal, too," said Marie, as she bent over the vase of flowers. "I know it will delight Aunt Diana, and it certainly was kind of Maggie and Amos. Mrs. Sutton and Marie had a fire soon started in the grate. The cool nights made the large room chilly. When they heard the train whistle, all spoke a welcome home at Aunt Dorotha's. John drove up the driveway with Diana, Hettie and Gaynor. Diana sprang out before the team had hardly stopped. She dashed up the walk as of old. Mrs. Sutton breathed a prayer of relief as she realized that Diana had not changed. Yes, it was the same girl come back to them once more. She clasped Diana to her, with tears of joy streaming over her cheeks. When Diana entered the living room, her eyes rested on the great masses of lilies, and she exclaimed in wonder and admiration, and went to them and buried her face in their midst. Mrs. Sutton told her who placed them. As Marie came in with Hettie and Gaynor she thought she had never seen any one so lovely as Aunt Diana. Mrs. Sutton related how Maggie and Amos had gathered the flowers. Diana turned to the kitchen and ran into the old people ere they knew that she had arrived. She clasped their hands kindly. As Maggie gazed into the eyes of her Diana she could

not speak for joy. "Maggie, I am going to tell you and Amos first of all—I am going to marry Pal Duncan before long and we will all live under the spell of the firs." She told them how precious the lilies were on account of Pal and her childhood days. She left the old people happy as she returned to Marie and her sister.

"Marie, where is my namesake? I'm just wild to see her." Marie led her to Aunt Dorotha's room, where little Diana lay sleeping. As Diana bent to kiss her she opened her blue eyes and, reaching up her arms, smiled into Diana's face. "Oh, you little dear," said Diana, gathering her up and carrying her out to where the others were. Gaynor thought he had never seen another such Madonna, as she bent her gaze on the baby in her arms.

"Yes, Diana's place was in the home; she never looked as beautiful as now, as she stood holding the little one to her breast, with eyes filled with love.

"Cousin Hettie, have you seen her yet," and she brought her to Hettie's side.

Yes, Gaynor though, Baylor was right; her place was in the home. It was a busy day for Diana as she surveyed the home from top to bottom. Then she followed Amos to the stables, where Bonnie Bess and Black Diamond were the

only occupants left. Then she gave her first orders to Amos, which delighted his heart. She told him to go and choose some good farm horses at once. When she drew near Bonnie Bess she was delighted at the slick and well-cared-for appearance of her favorite horse. Bonnie Bess threw her head over Diana's shoulder as if to say she, too, welcomed her back home. Bessie and Ray soon came to greet her, then later Mrs. Medford and her husband. As Diana chatted on in her old-fashioned way, they could not believe that years had passed over her head since she had been with them before. It seemed that she had not changed except in becoming more beautiful than ever if it were possible for to do so. She was the same frank, jovial companion they had always known. As the day drew to a close they were loath to leave her. Rev. Hague, his wife, with Fred Medford, arrived. Fred was quite a young man now, but not too much grown to kiss Diana's cheek as he had done when she had held him on her lap years ago when he had found her in the old orchard weeping by herself. Diana talked joyfully of their intended camping expedition, which she had planned. She asked Bessie for Mr. Smith and Della's address, for she stated that she wanted the same old crowd. "It will mean a regular reunion of old friends, won't it?"

laughed Diana. "Sister, have you any songs left for your old friends? Will you condescend to sing for us after entertaining royalty."

"Indeed, sister, all my very best songs are left for my own dear friends." Diana went to the old piano and as the old friends listened, waited, and wondered if they would understand the class of music that she would sing now, her voice came as if in answer to their thoughts. Sweet, low, soft and feelingly and as clear as a bell, as the notes rose and fell, "How dear to my heart are the scenes of my childhood; when fond recollections present them to view. The orchard, the meadow, the green-tangled wildwood, and each loving spot that my infancy knew." Would they care, did they understand this class of music? Yes, indeed, this was the class of music that had thrilled thousands of people in two countries, and they did not wonder as the voice rang on. She sang on, many old favorites of camping days. Gaynor exclaimed, "Diana, if you had sang like that when you sang in Boston, you would never have been able to steal away from them."

"Oh, but cousin, I could not sing those songs there, for they would not seem true. Here it is so different; it is all true." When they rose to leave, the guests rejoiced to know their loved Diana was the same true-hearted girl they had al-

ways known, and they left the old home with prayers on their lips, that she would not leave the old home again. Diana begged Mrs. Medford to let Thelma stay with her. After the others had left she and Thelma went to the old-fashioned orchard, where she had been so happy and so sad. She told Thelma of her and Pal's new happiness. "I want you to stay with me as much as your mama can spare you, dear."

"Aunt Diana, if you are not going away again I think you ought to build the great large house now that you promised you would build," said Thelma.

"I wondered if you still wanted the large house, Pet. I think the old home plenty large for us all, don't you Thelma? But, as I promised to build the great large house, why, we will do so, even yet. I will keep that promise, little girl, and it will be well for us to spend our time or part of it under the old fir trees, that have been so much to us all."

When they returned to the house, all was quiet, and they went at once to Diana's room. After putting Thelma to rest, Diana knelt before her mother's picture and thanked God for the many blessings he was bestowing on her. She prayed that Carl might be happier in his new home than he had been here under the fire trees. The weeks

sped by rapidly and old Mr. Black returned from his vacation. Diana at once mounted Bonnie Bess and went to her old and trusted friend. When she entered his office she noticed he had grown very feeble. He drew her in the office and said: "Well, young lady, it is high time you came back to attend to your business affairs. Here you have just kept me in the harness when otherwise I could resign from business, and rest.' '

"I am really sorry, Mr. Black, but you have done wonderful things for me, and I can never thank you enough for it. I always want your advice and I am not going to allow you to resign, even yet."

He smiled a well-satisfied smile as he saw the world had not changed Diana. He went on to explain to her of the lumbering business. When he had told her all he turned to her and said: "Now, I want you to go up to the lumber camps before you return to the public. I want you to see what the men have done in the great timber before I send them back there for another year. I feel thy will need another location, and new camps all through the line."

"But Mr. Black, I am here to stay. I hope to spend much time in the camps during the winter," said Diana quietly.

"Do you mean you are not going back to the

public?" asked Mr. Black in a doubtful voice.

"No, I am not going back. I would never have gone in the first place if I had been sure I could have made a success of the lumbering—but you know, I wanted the old home back again and I had to work. I had not hoped to get it so easy, but I guess Carl did not care for anything but Viola Ditson. Viola meant all in all to him, poor boy," sighed Diana. "What a life she is leading him. I am so sorry."

"Yes, Diana, Carl cared for nothing but that girl, and she has made his life unpleasant enough to hate living, even. He sees his mistake, and badly as he treated you, I pity him. He is waking up to plain facts now, and I pity him."

"I am so sorry for Carl," murmured Diana, "for he was never unkind to me until he met Viola Ditson. Let us hope she changes her way in their new home in Chicago."

"I hope she may," said Mr. Black, doubtfully, "but now, Diana, I feel I am getting too old to attend to business. I heard Pal Duncan is coming back to Essex, and I think I will get him to fill my place here in this office, and I feel sure he will gladly look after this business for you. I wrote him of filling my place and he wrote very favorably of the proposition. I am quite certain he will do well for you."

"Perhaps he may," said Diana, as her eyes filled with mischief, "but, Mr. Black, I understand some women do not care to employ their husbands as advisers, and I am not sure that I care to, either."

Mr. Black caught the merry twinkle in her eyes and exclaimed, "I see, I see; you are to remain in Essex now. The one man of your dreams has come to life. Thank God it is George Duncan. Pal is worthy even of you, Diana Varden. He is a clean, moral man and you have my congratulations and best wishes for success under your new attorney."

Mr. Black accompanied Diana to where Bonnie Bess stood awaiting her mistress. As he watched Diana ride away he said aloud, "So like the old man." He returned to the office in better spirits than he had been in for many days. As the weeks sped into months Diana was once more established in the old home and planning for the lumber camps for the winter work. She had not been idle and yet she had never been happier in her life than in her work at the old home. The party from New York and Boston, with Della and Smith, would arrive on the morrow for the camping expedition. Diana was in her glory. She, with Cousin Gaynor and Hettie, had been up to the camps and made all arrangements for

a fine trip. Iola had written them she would join them later on. Ned had gone to sea and her father had planned a trip to Old Orchard Beach, and from there to Canada, and she would remain with Diana until his return. When Diana read the letter Hettie and Gaynor sat near.

"Iola will join us later on," said Diana, and going to the mantle she put the letter down and went on planning their trip.

"Cousin, I wish Carl were to be here. It won't seem right without him, will it? I am going to write at once and ask he and Viola to come and join us."

Before Hetty or Gaynor could speak she was at the desk, writing to Carl. She begged them to once more come and join the old friends under the spell of the firs. She finished writing and went to mail the letter without another word. Gaynor said, gazing after her: "Hettie, it is no wonder the people were held in fascination by this girl. She is beyond my comprehension. Think of her sending for Carl, after all he has caused her of tears and sorrow."

"Well, Gordon, I perhaps were more to blame than Carl," and tears fell over Hettie's cheeks, as she thought of all Diana's kindness to her, too. Gaynor went out on the veranda, while Hettie sat and thought of all Diana had been to her, after

she had treated her as badly as one could treat another. She had shown her the true way to live, Hettie mused on. Diana had said, to try and forget the bitter part of life, to fill her heart with the love that was once there. Now she knew she had loved at one time. Diana said it were better to remember the love once there and instead of seeking vengeance on Vandyke, by harming little Iola, to let the memories of the happy past fill her heart with the love that was once there; and to remember this: it was better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all. She had tried to put all the bitterness out of her life and she had been happier by so doing. She was thankful she had as kind a man for a husband as Gordan had proven to be; although she did not love Gaynor she respected him, and she tried to make his life happier. At times she wished it could have all gone on as it had been when she worshipped Vandyke. Instead of wanting to see him, to have vengeance, she longed to once more see hi mbefore they both left this world, to tell him of May, and to tell him that she forgave him and that she had been true in her love for him.

How could a man be so heartless. Yes, she must forget all but forgiveness now. She would treat little Iola kindly this time. She wondered

if Iola ever told her father of her. Well, if she did he would not realize the girl he had ruined under the name of Gaynor. Diana had told her that Iola's mother was dead. Yet for a moment she had been glad; then she remembered that although he were free, she was not. Then, no doubt, he had long ago forgotten the girl of the beach escapade. She went to the mantle and took down Iola's letter. Diana would not mind her reading it, she knew. As she opened it and read, her lips grew white. Vandyke was coming to Maine and perhaps she would meet him face to face. No, oh, no, Diana would never have that happen, she knew she would not. As she read on, she thought he was so near and yet so far. He would go by her on his way to Canada, for Diana would not take the hint of inviting him that little Iola had given by this letter. Oh, how she would like to see him once more. No! no! it were better not to meet him. Gaynor trusted to her honor now to help him in the future in his work and she had promised she would keep his name free from slander. No, she could never see Vandyke on this earth; it was better so. As she lay the letter back on the mantle she wondered why Vandyke was coming back to the very beach where he had wrecked her life. Could it be possible that hhe rememberd their

stay there? Hettie closed her eyes and dreamed of lov's young dream. As she sat there she did in reality drift away into dreamland. Diana came in the door and saw Hettie sleeping. She went to the mantle and took Iola's note and ran lightly up to her room. No, she could not invite Iola's father here now, but she would write Iola that on his return from Canada she would enjoy having her father spend some time at her home, for Mr. Vandyke had been very kind to her when at his home. Much as she would like to invite him now, she could not, on account of Hettie. Poor Cousin had trials enough through Hettie, but, oh, how her heart ached for poor Hettie, too. She was so very happy herself, she hated to think of sorrow in other lives, but she felt sure at times that Cousin Gaynor's life was far from being happy. Diana locked Iola's note away and went down the stairs and found Gaynor out on the veranda dreaming, with a happy light in his eyes. She felt thankful that little Iola's note was locked safely away. Little did she think that it had already carried the message to the ones she tried to shield. The guests began to arrive for the camping expedition, and Pal was rejoiced to find the girl he loved happily installed in the old home once more. They all sat on the broad veranda that evening and

it was a cheerful sight for happy voices and laughter filled the air, and the party could not tell where Diana was needed the most—in the home or to the public. It seemed she was needed in both places. Here in the old home she was happy. Driscoll was telling Etter Hyde that Boston went wild over that girl's face and form, as well as her singing, but they did not know that better than all was her character. "She has the most beautiful character of any person I have ever met." The days at camp were happy ones, more to Diana, because among her old friends. She took them into her new happiness with her. The night seated around the great campfire that only Diana knew how to make and arrange for solid comfort, she made the evenings a paradise; each one related some experience or told some story. Then Diana never refused to sing for them. As they gazed into the fire the songs seemed to come to life in many of their hearts. They spent every evening by the campfire under the spell of the fir tree's kindly shelter. One morning as the party was starting up river, Marie called to Diana to look who was coming, and looking up she saw Carl, the brother, who had caused her so much sorrow. She ran to meet him as of old, exclaiming: "I am so glad, brother mine; you are just in time. Did Viola come?"

Carl clasped Diana in his arms, saying: "Diana, I have been a beast, that is what I have been. Can you ever for—"

"Hush, Carl," she broke in, "we are under the spell of the firs and all so happy. I am so glad you came," and she kissed the tear-wet cheeks.

Before night Carl was happier than he had been for days and days. He had forgotten all the old selfishness and was as happy as when a boy, and he and Diana had rested under the spell of the firs. He liked Mr. Ramsey and enjoyed to explain the way of the woods to him on their trips, as Mr. Ramsey was Carl's partner. The party felt rejoiced that it was not Viola in Carl's canoe. Diana was so glad to see Carl enjoy life, for she noticed his aged appearance. He had changed more than any of the old friends, and it hurt her to see this, for she did really love Carl. Diana had old Mr. Baylor as her partner, and the old man was rejoiced to think the girl gave up younger company to remain with him. He took a great interest in the ideas of this girl. She impressed on his mind the importance of taking into consideration the welfare of the working class, as well as the other class. She said: "It seems the government has been trying to blind the workers to all the most important work of

the government. Now the men are awakening to the fact that the ballot is where they are fooled, and they are not going to let the old party theories bluff them much longer. When old clothes get old, worn, torn, faded and terribly ragged, why we simply throw them away and get newer and better ones. We profit by the experience of the past. When we first learned of the automobile some people said they would never become a success—the old way was good enough! But as time goes on we see automobiles used in every capacity. The horse was too slow and now where it took a horse to travel all day, an automobile travels in a few hours. Therefore, we find we can get along without the auto. We advance in every thing. We keep the good things out of the past, and the bad we forget; at least, we try to forget them and in time we do. It seems it is like that in everything but politics, but you know and I know that the old party politics are badly torn, worn, faded, ragged and terribly dirty, yet when a better, a newer and a cleaner party comes to life they say everything to down it. They say the man who starts a new party is a turncoat, a hypocrite, to turn against his party, the grand old party that he has stood for so long. He is considered two-faced; he will turn any way the wind blows, and all such stuff

as that. Now, I think an old saying is quite true that says: 'He is a fool who will not turn back when he discovers he is on the wrong track.' If that is what they call a turncoat, I hope the whole United States becomes turncoats. I tell you if I were a man I would love to vote for the man who is not ashamed to say he is disgusted with the old party, when he proves it is a bluff. The man who throws the ragged old party to the winds and works for a better one just as he would do with a useless old gown that proved an eyesore to all who come our way, May Baylor, the new party has come to life, and as time goes on the world will find they must have it as they did with the automobile. I am so glad Cousin Gaynor has decided to go with the new party. It will mean so much more to the working man, as well as to every other class. He can't get along without the men in the overalls; the downfall of America is just because the old parties are not true to themselves.."

After they had landed for their dinners that day and Diana was busy preparing the lunch, Mr. Baylor went to where Ramsey and the other men were lying beneath the fir-waving branches. As he sat down on an old log he said:

"Boys, I have been learning something regarding politics today," and Mr. Baylor went on to

tell of what Diana had said. He turned to Ramsey and said:

"When I get back to Boston, by Gad, I am going to put my money back of the man who shows up the most spotless in his everyday life under an investigation—that's just what I am going to do."

"Well, old man, you will vote for the coming party, all right—that's what I am going to do."

"Me, too," broke in Driscoll, "the old parties are too downright rotten to suit me."

"Miss Varden is right; we need some kind of a change, God knows that," Smith said. "I have always voted for what I considered the best man, yet I have never studied the new party's methods very much."

Driscoll went on to explain the policies and old Mr. Baylor took in every word. He told of the progress and what it would mean to the people. When they were all seated at the table of rough logs Pal and Diana stood quietly talking and Mrs. Medford called to them. "Come, come, no love-making so near dinner time!" Harry called also, "They should let you two have a few moments to plan that wedding, hey, Paul, old boy?" They all laughed as Diana's face grew rosy and Driscoll understood for the time that the man was worthy who gave Diana that ring.

"Well, when is the happy affair to come off, Miss Diana?"

"I say, girl, let's have that wedding here under the fir trees before we leave—what do you say, girl?" said old man Baylor.

"Oh, do, Diana," cried Della, "you know you said that love is true made under the spell of the fir trees," and then she whispered as Diana came to her side, "and that was true Diana, dear." Pal came to her side and whispered, "Why not, Diana?"

Diana said: "I would say yes if Sister, Maggie, Amos, Dr. Smith and Mr. Black were with us, but—"

"I will go for the others," said Carl.

Harry volunteered to accompany him. It was arranged that the last night they would celebrate the wedding. As the ladies were packing up the lunch dishes they were planning to return to camp and arrange for a grand affair under the fir trees. Harry and Carl went to Essex that night and on the morn were to bring others to witness the wedding. As the morning broke fair and clear and the sun shone down in all its glory, the camps were awake and busy preparing for great doings that night. At noon the canoes could be seen around the bend, and as Diana ran down to meet them she saw that little Iola

was in with Harry, and she was overjoyed at this unexpected pleasure. rMs. Sutton brought her white satin dress, and she also brought lilies, pure and white. After the sun sank beyond the hills and lake and the great campfire was sending forth its radiance, they all gathered beneath the great fir trees. It was a queer but lively assemblage that followed the Rev. Hague to the great fire. Then as Ray, Gaynor, Smith and John played the wedding march on stringed instruments, little Thelma Medford came forward first, strewing water lilies in their path, and Pal and Diana followed, with Harry and Iola as maid and best man. As they stood with the light from the great fire flickering over their faces, Diana was made one, with the man of her dreams, under ths spell of the firs. Was he the ideal man—the one man, as she had said—would she find the love as true as she had pictured it to be in the days gon eby. All hoped she might find the love she sought flawless, but Diana was such a mystery. Smith always said she kept one always guessing. When Rev. Hague thought of what might have been, he had his wishes realized in the past. There was silence for some moments, as they gazed at the beautiful picture they made, then Pal clapsed Diana, whispering. "All mine for-

ever and may you never regret the vows given here." Harry Maxwell came to them and bent to kiss Diana and she was surprised at the pale face; he was white, even to the lips. He congratulated them and with his old ringing voice and laughter and, turning to Pal, he said: "I want to always remai nthe same old friend, Pal. boy, and you can spare me just this one, can't you?" The others gathered around them and Diana was carried away from Pal's side. Marie noticed Aunt Diana sigh as she drew near, and wondered just why? Dr. Smith came forward and said: "May God bless you, Diana child, and always keep the spell of the firs over you and Pal." There was another who was always thinking of what this would have meant to him had he been in Pal's place. As he saw her standing by Pal's side, he came forward; she was more like a dream tonight than a reality, with the white satin folds falling around her, with the precious water lilies in her hair and clustering around her snowy neck. She seemed so pure and white, truly like the gems she held—white with a heart of gold—pure, untarnished gold. As Gaynor came forward she, for the first time, let her lips meet him. As she raised them to his lips he saw how white and cold she seemed. He congratulated her and gazed into the depth of the dark lustrous eyes.

What did he see there. No, it was nothing, no, it was not. It could not be that look there that he had seen there but once before, and that was years ago, when they had spent their days in the fir trees. He moved on to where Pal stood, and as he caught Pal's hand he said, in an uundertone: "Pal, I wish you luck and happiness and love all along the way. You must prize the one so many of us love." Pal pitied Gaynor as he thought of what this really meant to him, for Gaynor was a grand good man. After they sat around the great old campfire for sometime they rose and started back for Essex and home, where Maggie had a dinner waiting them. Carl had explained to her why Diana wanted her at camp; she worked hard nearly all night to prepare a wedding supper for her Diana. Harry and Iola went on ahead with Maggie; Carl and Mrs. Sutton returned with Amos; the others all followed, bidding farewell to the camp. They all agreed that they had never enjoyed any trip as much as they had this one in the fir trees, and they hoped that the life of the two lovers would always remain as true as it was now, under the spell of the firs. After they reached home and had partaken of the supper that Maggie had prepared, they retired to the large living room where they nestled around the fire, where Diana entertained them. She told Ora she

thought the spell of the firs had reached Etta and Mr. Driscoll, as they were much together on this trip. As the evening grew to midnight they retired. Diana went to the piano; Pal stood by her side and she sang more beautifully and touchingly than ever they had heard her sing. "Home, Sweet, Home." Be it ever so humble, there is no place like home." As her voice died away they all bid the happy couple good night and retired to their rooms; but two men walked beneath the fir trees long after the others were sleeping, unknown to each other—Harry and Gaynor.

CHAPTER XXII.

UNDER THE SPELL OF THE FIR AND ONE MAN

Diana begged the guests to remain a week longer at the old home with them. Gaynor said he must return and Carl also, and Hettie wanted to visit May, and so they departed, after spending a fortnight at the old home. Mr. Baylor and his party took their leave at the end of the week. Mr. Hyde, Ora and Etta accompanied them, and only Harry and Iola remained with Pal and Di-

ana. Della and Smith stayed with Bessie and Ray, but spent much of their time at the old home and accompanied them on their trips to the lumber camps, where Diana and Pal arranged to have a new location for the coming winter. Life for the young people passed merrily on and Diana was very happy in her new life and love. Hettie left Gaynor and Carl and promised to return in a week to Boston after she had visited May. As they left her standing at the station she murmured aloud, "Yes, I will go—nobody will ever know. If they did it would matter but little to me." She boarded a car and was once more on her way to the beach where her life was wrecked. She alighted from the car and wandered to the old familiar places where she and Vandyke had been so happy. She turned to the arbor hanging with vines where Vandyke had told her of his love; she wondered if he ever came there now. As she reached the door she paused; it was occupied by an aged man; he sat with bowed head. Hettie paused and turned to go away when the man, hearing footsteps, raised his head. As he beheld Hettie he cried: "Hettie, my God! Hettie! wait. Is it really you, in flesh and blood?" Hettie turned and stood gazing at the old man. She knew the voice—it came as is from the dead—but this man she knew not. He was old with hair

and beard as white as snow. He faltered as he raised himself to his feet. "I beg your pardon, lady, I thought you were Hettie Brown." The old man fell back as Hettie gazed into his eyes; she knew he was the father of May. Alas! only the brown eyes were the same; he had changed, a wonderful change. As she saw the eyes open again and rest on her face she felt the old love surge up again as of old. "It is I, Hettie Brown," she cried, as she raised his head; "and you haye not forgotten me?"

"Forget you, Hettie Brown, I never could forget you, Hettie!" He raised his hand to her amber locks—now fast turning gray, and caressed them as of old. "Hettie, can you ever forgive me for the dastardly wrong I did you? Oh, that crime! I have repented, Hettie. God only knows what I suffered when I found out I loved you, yes, loved you as I never loved my wife! Oh, Hettie, say you forgive me," and he put his arm around her and drew her down by his side. Then Hettie told him of her suffering and of May and her struggle to earn a living. Then she told him of meeting Iola at her aunt's, and of the vengeance in her heart—of Diana and Ora letting it go as an act of brain fever—then of her talk to Diana in her unconscious hours, and how she had persuaded her to forgive and live for love

only. As Hettie talked, Vandyke sobbed; then he told her of how he and his wife had quarreled and of how he sought to spite her by keeping company with someone else; then of how she had attracted him and then before he knew it she had crept into his heart. It was just before Iola was born; then my wife sent me the message of her birth. I knew I must return to her. I became intoxicated and left that note for you, Hettie—coward that I was. It was only after I joined my wife that I realized the cruelty that I had heaped upon you. Then I returned to the beach to try and make arrangements to have you cared for. I fully intended to get a divorce—but you were gone. Then I learned of your condition through the doctor, but he could not tell me where you had gone. I returned to Oregon, a wiser but sadder man. Although my wife and I never quarreled, I stayed on for the sake of the children—my boy and girl—but without love. We never lived as man and wife after Iola was born; she lived for her children and I kept the home. I always hoped that I might have your forgiveness before I died. Iola told me of meeting a cousin of Miss Varden's who looked so much like your picture; but I never thought it could be you, Hettie. It was you, was it not? He kissed her lips, her brow

and neck before she could answer; then she pulled herself free from the feeble clinging arms, saying: "Vandyke I always loved you—I forgive you; I loved you better than life itself. But you came too late. I, too, am married and—but Hettie got no farther—Vandyke fell back. As she bent to raise his head and press her lips to his, he breathed his last; he had gone to answer to his God. Hettie kissed his lips but life was gone and she sat as one in a dream as she gazed into his face; then she bursted into wild sobs. She started out, but turned and once more gazed into his face; then she passed out and down towards the beach. As she stepped on a car, she saw two men carrying the unconscious form of Vandyke towards the hotel. Hettie turned her head and wiped the tears away; then her heart turned to little Iola who was alone in the world. She felt only pity for the poor little frail girl. She went on her way to see May. Her heart was sad as the thought over and over again; "Oh! why do the good gifts come too late."

One evening, Diana and Iola were out in the old fashioned garden, Iola told Diana how happy she was; holding up her hand on which sparkled a beautiful diamond, she whispered: "Harry gave it to me Diana and I do love him with all my heart." Diana was very happy as she sought

Harry and congratulated him. "She was next to you Diana, he answered, smiling. "I shall try and make her very happy." Just then the messenger boy came up the walk and asked for Miss Vandyke. Diana called Iola and handed her the message. As she opened it and read it her face grew white. The message told of her father's death; Diana also called Harry as she knew he could best comfort Iola in her great bereavement; then she left them alone while she hunted Pal to tell him of Mr. Vandike's death. Her heart was sad when she told him of little Iola's great sorrow and then she informed him how it came on top of her great gladness of a few moments before. They returned to the house where they found Iola weeping on Harry's shoulder. Harry accompanied Iola to take her father home, then she tried to find Ned, but she could not, as he seemed lost to all. They layed her father quietly away; told Iola she would have to return to Ora until Christmas then they would be married quietly. Iola closed the old home and they returned to New York where she was made very welcome by Ora and Etta.

On Gaynor's return to Boston he entered the race for Mayor and to his surprise Mr. Baylor

offered to put all the money he had at his command; and then later Odell came to his rescue. Gaynor was fast winning in the race. He was to give a noted dinner and lecture and he wanted very much to have a large crowd; he wrote Diana of his plans and asked her to sing on this occasion. She answered that she would sing and that he must do his best. He was delighted and advertised that Madam Aurora would once more return to Boston to sing and as the night drew near, all of Boston talked of the singer. When Gaynor began his speech everybody listened very attentively and Diana sat listening also. She had never dreamed it was in cousin Gaynor to talk as he did that night and when he closed his speech, the hall rang with cheers for Gaynor. Then Diana sang in answer to their call. It was with delight later that she read of his success; she felt that it meant so much for the people. She and Pal were happy as the days flew past; Pal did fill Mr. Black's office and she spent much time with him planning their work in the lumber camps.

After the crews were put to work in the new camps, she and Pal spent Sunday at the camps and she sang them their favorite hymns. They worshipped old man Vardin's daughter as they

still called her. Years have passed and Diana and Pal are the same lovers as of old. They are each interested in their lumbering business. Diana had gone to the office with Pal and they were planning another gathering of their old friends to the Maine woods for the Christmas holidays. It had been five years since the party had witnessed the wedding neath the Fir trees. Gaynor had written that he and Hettie were coming for Christmas. As she and Pal started home afater a abusy day's planning at the office, the snow began falling in great flakes, but still it was warm and glorious to those two as they wended their way to the old home.

Gaynor and Hettie had started for Maine and Hettie stopped off a few days to see May; Gaynor came on to Diana and the old home alone. He had not been there for four years and he wondered if Diana had changed in that time. As he walked up the broad walk beneath the Firs he felt a welcome around him in the balmy breeze and fragrance of the firs. As he came in the great hall there was nobody in sight; he intended to surprise them, so he walked into the large living room and sat down before a cheery fire thinking that Diana or Pal would soon enter; as he gazed into the fire he dreamt of the past, of his love for this girl that Pal married. He

wondered if their love would last forever and ever, as Diana had expected it to. All of a sudden he felt someone near him; he had heard no sound, he turned in surprise to gaze into the eyes of Diana; but such a tiny being; she gazed into his face with her dark eyes peeping from beneath long dark lashes and raven curls. She took his hand kindly, saying, "tume on," and she lead him across the room: he followed the little tot wondering. Nobody had ever told him Diana even had a child, but this must be her child; she had the same eyes, the same winning ways. As she climbed to the window seat, she once more turned her eyes wonderingly to his face, as he stood gazing at her; then again she caught his hand, pulling him towards her. She said: "Sit down" and patted the seat; he sat down and caught her to him and she smiled into his face as her tiny arms fastened around his neck. "Nice man," she lisped as she kissed his lips; he hugged the little warm being to his heart, as he said: "What is your name dear?"

"I's Dolly, Mamma's baby," she lisped, giving him a wondering look with her dark eyes. Just then Maggie appeared in the doorway wiping her hands on her apron.

"And sure it do be Mr. Gaynor," she said, "I was after the little fairy· she slipped away from

me and I feared she'd come to some harm. Sure Mr. Gaynor ye nearly took me breath whin I see the little one in yer arms. Amos reads so many tales of the men what steals little ones, and me heart leaped to me mouth whin I see's the darling with ye, but I'm that glad to find tis yerself, Mr. Gaynor;" and again she wiped her hand, as he carried the little girl on one arm towards Maggie. "Nice man—dood man," said the little tot, as she clung to Gaynor. "Who is the little fairy, Maggie?" said Gaynor, as he gave Maggie a hearty hand clasp. "Sure and could'nt ye tell by them eyes, Mr. Gaynor, she is Miss Diana's baby and she calls her Dorotha for the old lady. I must be tendin to me cooking now that I know she is safe," and Maggie withdrew to the kitchen as Gaynor carried the little tot to the window and sat down with the little girl close to his heart; he thought of all he had missed in life as the little girl lay cuddled up in his arms, warm and happy. Just then she raised up, clapping her hands, crying,

"Mama, tum, and Daddy, too."

Gaynor looked out the window, and sure enough, there came Pal and Diana. They were laughing gaily as they walked beneath the fir trees; the snow was falling softly and lightly on the two as they walked on towards home

and happiness. Diana had not changed, as he could see as she chatted with the man at her side; the love had lasted, for as they paused to brush the flakes of snow from their clothes Pal took her face in his hands and kissed her tenderly. They came on up the steps, as little Dorotha tapped on the window they turned and threw kisses to the pet of their home. Then Diana's eyes gazed into Gaynor's, and she exclaimed to Pal: "It is Cousin Gaynor, Pal," and they came hastily in and welcomed him. Then Diana held out her arms to little Dorotha saying: "Has she worried you, cousin?" But Dorotha clung to him saying "Good man, mama, nice man," and Pal laughed a hearty, ringing laugh as he said: "Now, Diana, you have lost her this time."

"Come, come, dear, I am afraid Cousin Gaynor is tired of such a little frisky midget like you," she took Dorotha in her arms but she struggled to be free. Pal went out to lay his coat in the hall laughing, and Gaynor said, looking into Diana's love-pleading eyes: "Dont, Diana; don't take her; let me have this much of you to love."

As Diana read the love written there, she turned and followed Pal into the hall, saying: "Did you ever, Pal—the little scamp would not come to me at all."

"I'm not the only one she slights," laughed Pal as he pinched Diana's cheeks. "You were so proud of her clinging to you when I coaxed her to come to me." Pal again returned to the living room where Dorotha lay in Gaynor's arms, as he sat in a comfortable chair before the fire. Pal fancied there were traces of tears in the man's eyes as he carressed the little tot. Diana soon joined them and told Gaynor of their plans for a reunion of old friends at the Christmas season, yet Gaynor was too busy in listening to the little girl who bore the eyes and hair of the one being he really ever loved. When Diana returned, after she had seen to the preparing of the evening meal, she found little Dorotha sleeping on Gaynor's breast. When she stooped to take her from him, he said, kissing the tiny face: "This afternoon has given me a glimpse into heaven, Diana. What tender little flowers they are."

"She is sweet, isn't she?" Diana said, as she carried her to where Pal had arranged a tiny dainty little cot. As Diana lay her down she and Pal both bent and kissed the tiny face and left her smiling in her sleep. After they had partaken of the evening meal and returned to the room, they found little Dorotha still sleeping. Gaynor went on to tell of his work as

Mayor of the city, of the success and progress of the new party and now, after all this time, he was to run for Congress once more, but under a different ticket. "McCoy is a good man," said Gaynor, "and he has done much to help me in my work in the city. Under the old parties a man cannot do much for the betterment of mankind no matter how good a man he is. McCoy is of Catholic faith; therefore, he is an upright, honorable man, as true to all his politics as he is to his religion, and that means true to himself and his God."

Gaynor asked Pal how he liked the lumbering business. "Fine; I enjoy it fine, Cousin Gaynor. It's more of a pleasure than a care to us, for we both tak ean interest in studying the men and their ways, and of how we can get our lumber with more profit to both ourselves and the men." Pal told of how the other firms had accused him of spoiling the men. They say they cannot get results from their men since we have treated our men as if they were human. But I know treating the men as we do has paid us. We pay them as we would like to be paid under the same circumstances, and they have put money in our pockets as the result of the same. They take an interest in their work and never once have we failed to get our logs to the mill, while

firms all around us have failed. I tell you, the time has come when men will not be slaves. They are coming into their own and I am glad they show their manhood in the way they do. Somebody has said 'God rule the Heavens—the almighty dollar rules the earth.' The time has passed when this might have seemed true. To-day God is showing us more and more that it is as he wills; not as money wills. What can money do when God says: 'Come, we go, rich or poor alike,' and the time has come when we are beginning to realize to live right we must do His will, and do unto others as we wish to be done by if we get a profit out of living." As Diana listened to Pal that night he felt that Diana was right in choosing this man; he was worthy of her, and she was loved and cared for now. As she once said that you can't tell a man's character by his clothes; you could not, for he had never given Pal credit for making the man he had proved to be. That night, after they had gone to their room and little Dorotha lay sleeping near, Diana said: "Pal, I wish your father would come visit us again and see little Dorotha once more."

"I do, too, but you know I could not get over father marrying again as he did; he has never cared to spend any time here at the old home. I

believe on account of the grave over there, Diana. I think when too late he realizes his mistake. For my mother had all the love he had to give; she was not the woman I wanted to see in my mother's place. But write and ask him, Diana; he may come to see Dorotha."

"I will, if you request it, Pal; indeed, I will," said Diana as she threw herself in his arms. He bent and kissed the lips of the only woman he ever loved. Gaynor had begged Diana to let him hold Dorotha until she went to bed. The little tot looked up at him and smiled as her mother put her into her nightgown and handed her over to Gaynor. After they had gone to their room Gaynor sat by the fire thinking of what a home like this one meant to the world. He buried his face in his hands and mourned his own sad life. Then he thought of Diana's song, "With You in Eternity." He arose and went to his room. As days passed by Gaynor could be found following after the little dark-haired tot who toddled about the home. The night before the guests arrived Pal told Diana she must sing for them, as it would be the last night they would be free for some time. As Diana went, at his request, she sang the old favorites of their camping days, "With You in Eternity." She sang, if anything, sweeter and with a richer and if possible a

softer voice than she did when she sang this five years ago in Boston. As she sang Pal went to her side as enraptured; then as she finished he exclaimed: "Di, that was glorious. I never heard you sing that before. It just suits your voice and it is a beautifully worded song." Gaynor sat with little Dorotha pressed close to his heart, and he dreamed on, as Pal kissed the sweet lips of his wife. They bade Gaynor good-night, and Pal took little Dorotha and followed Diana to their room. On the morrow the old home would be full to overflowing. Diana wished so much for Carl to come, for as Mrs. Sutton said, all the happiness he had was his short stays with Diana in the old home. As Diana sat before the fire thinking of the many changes in her life, she drifted back to her dream in the fir nook. She could see once more the one man emerge from the fire and she felt his kisses on her brow. Looking up, Pal was looking down on her smiling. "Well, Di, have you gone back to dreaming again?" She jumped up and began preparing for bed, for she realized she sure enough had gone back to dreamland. Pal clasped her to his heart, whispering words of undying love. She closed her eyes and once more dreamed under the spell of the firs of the ideal man—the one man of her dreams.

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Peace and quietude reigned over the old home as the fir trees kept vigilant over the occupants thereof. And the spell of the firs was in many other hearts that night as they prepared to come back to the fir trees and the girl who sat by the fire, under the spell of the firs and dreamed of the one man.

THE END